

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

July 10, 2000

THE END IS NEAR



Can the Mexican opposition topple the PRI?

Rick Rockwell reports

**PLUS: JUAN GONZALEZ
ON THE FBI'S SECRET
40-YEAR CAMPAIGN
AGAINST PUERTO RICO**



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Letters

Target Practice

I've spent the weeks since my time in the D.C. jail countering the corporate media's inaccurate reporting and jaded opinions of the IMF/World Bank protests in Washington.

Now I find that I also have to counter this phenomenon in the independent media, as reflected in the Web version of Terry J. Allen's "Breaking Law to Keep Order" (May 29), particularly this paragraph concerning the events at 20th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue on April 17:

The arrests came after surreal negotiations between [Assistant Police Chief Terry] Gainer, holding a bunch of roses, and spokeswoman Mary Bull, dressed like a molting tree. As one of his "concessions," Gainer agreed that the police would don their badges. By then, says [Attorney Katya] Komisaruk, who would have preferred a more "robust" ending, activists were "chilled [both physically and psychologically], fatigued, and too polite." "Somebody whose sense of tactics was at one extreme, foisted her views on the rest of the group," she said.

First of all, the allegation that I "foisted" my views on the group is untrue. The decision regarding the mass action we took at this intersection was made by majority vote (7 to 2 in favor) by a team comprised of nine spokesperson members. We worked hard to make a collective decision as quickly as possible under difficult circumstances. The final scenario included many police concessions, not just putting their badges on (though that is an important safety issue in a protest situation).

The other option was to charge the barricade and suffer more police violence. Almost everyone who was at risk opposed such an action. I found these remarks attributed to Katya Komisaruk of the Midnight Special Law Collective (my attorneys) surprising: The last time we met, Katya was joyfully hugging me and thanking me for my role in the jail solidarity actions. I spoke with Paul Marini of the collective about these remarks, and he indicated that Allen had misquoted her.

Far from being a "too polite" gesture, this action—to exercise our First Amendment rights at the risk of arrest (we got five days in jail) and to peacefully pass through the unconstitutional police barricade and walk up the public street to the IMF/World Bank meeting and continue protesting—was courageous and heroic. What would Allen consider "robust" enough? People had already been billy-clubbed and pepper-sprayed. The situation was escalating. Does "robust" mean more blood, more injuries? Are we just cannon-fodder—or what?

In jail, I was the first to resist returning to court when the prosecutors were trying to weaken solidarity. I was the first called, the first to strip, the first to alert my fellow prisoners of the situation. I was tackled naked by six hefty guards and dragged down a long hallway by metal handcuffs, screaming and crying in pain—my right hand is still numb from this assault. Is this "robust" enough, I wonder?

This irresponsible, uninformed criticism of my actions and of our collective decision was typical of the glib journalists who covered this protest from their desks, and seemed to want more violence. Furthermore, Allen's descriptions of my "molting" tree costume, and Chief Gainer holding the flowers during "surreal negotiations," are the kind of weird characterizations that the corporate media used in their efforts to make everything at the protests seem bizarre and alien.

My costume was a redwood tree, which I wore in protest of redwood forest destruction by the Fishers of the Gap clothing stores. Its foam was suffering from the driving rain we had all been in that day. Gainer was not holding flowers through most of the negotiation. He grabbed them from another policeman at the end of the action. What kind of tree I was wearing, why I was wearing it, why it was wet, and what the flowers really meant (simple relief on the chief's part) are all vital details that were left out of most accounts, including this one.

Whatever the final negotiated action had been, the corporate media would have given it a negative spin, as did this independent media story. The solution we came to prevented further police violence, allowed each affinity group to be interviewed by the media, and to sing its song, or chant its chant, as they crossed the line, and to resist in whatever way they decided on the other side. Instead of badmouthing protesters, I hope that the news media and others will concentrate on taking the D.C. police to task for the illegal barricade and the illegal arrests—blatant violations of our First Amendment rights. To me, the police seem a much more appropriate target.

Mary Bull

**Save the Redwoods/Boycott the Gap Campaign
San Francisco**

Terry J. Allen replies: *The article was indeed about police violations of civil liberties, and the brief mention of Mary Bull was simply one of many examples of how police strategy affected the protest. That some people disagreed with her leadership is not particularly surprising given the democratic nature of the movement and the stress of the situation. Since she admits there was disagreement, I can only conclude that she wishes to censor the facts. Bull mistakes journalism for cheerleading; she confuses accurate reporting with bad-mouthing.*

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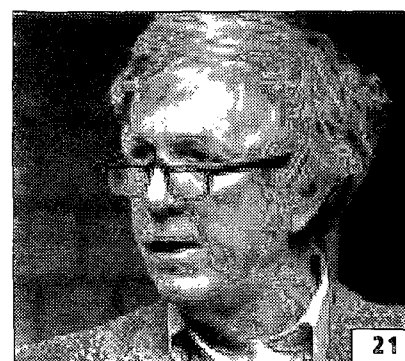
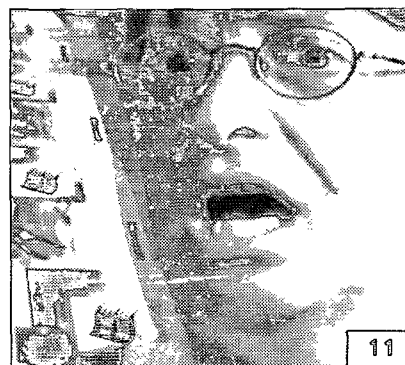
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Cover: Steve Anderson Photo: Wesley Bocxe/Newsmakers

Just Say No

By Salim Muwakkil

If the House passes the Methamphetamine Anti-Proliferation Act, our constitutional rights, already wounded, will become yet another casualty in the long line of victims felled by the war on drugs. This insane crusade has fueled a bullet-soaked underground economy that has helped devastate large swaths of urban America, filled U.S. prisons with more inmates than anywhere on earth and deeply corrupted law enforcement.

This collateral damage cannot be justified. The war has not moved us any closer toward a drug-free society. Just the opposite: Drugs are more available now (to younger children) than before the war's inception during the Nixon administration; drug deaths are up; prices for hard drugs are at historic lows; addicts seeking help still have few places to turn. These are the findings of "The War on Drugs: Addicted to Failure," a recent report by the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies (IPS). This report, which compiles recommendations of a Citizens Commission on U.S. Drug Policy put together by the IPS, is just one of many that reveal the drug war's tragic failure.

But none of this has deterred the dedicated drug warriors from their mindless offensive. Government officials and pandering politicians seem oblivious to the growing body of evidence that the paramilitary law enforcement model is just plain ineffective in addressing the problems of substance abuse. In fact, researchers are approaching a consensus that the combative approach only exacerbates the problem.

The Methamphetamine Anti-Proliferation Act explicitly sacrifices civil liberties for the cause of anti-drug warfare. The bill would make it a federal crime to teach or demonstrate how to make a controlled substance, or to distribute any information pertaining to the manufacture or use of a controlled substance. Although the bill is designed to prevent the transmission of online recipes for making meth, its provisions are so vague that they could outlaw virtually all speech about illegal drugs.

Although seven states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Nevada, Oregon and Washington) and the District of Columbia have passed referenda allowing the use of medical marijuana, any discussion of marijuana cultivation or use for medical purposes also would be banned by the bill. Under the legislation, advertising drug paraphernalia, directly or indirectly, would become a federal crime. For example, e-mailing a friend the phone number or Web address of a head shop could be punishable by three years in federal prison.

Just as ominously, the bill would allow federal agents to search people's homes without informing the owners. Now federal agents can search a home with a warrant, but they must inform the owner of their intent and reveal what they confiscated. But for the sake of the drug war, this Fourth Amendment protection would be wiped out. The government would never have to reveal what intangible items were taken (like items photographed or files copied from a

computer hard drive). How can an improper search be challenged if the target is never informed?

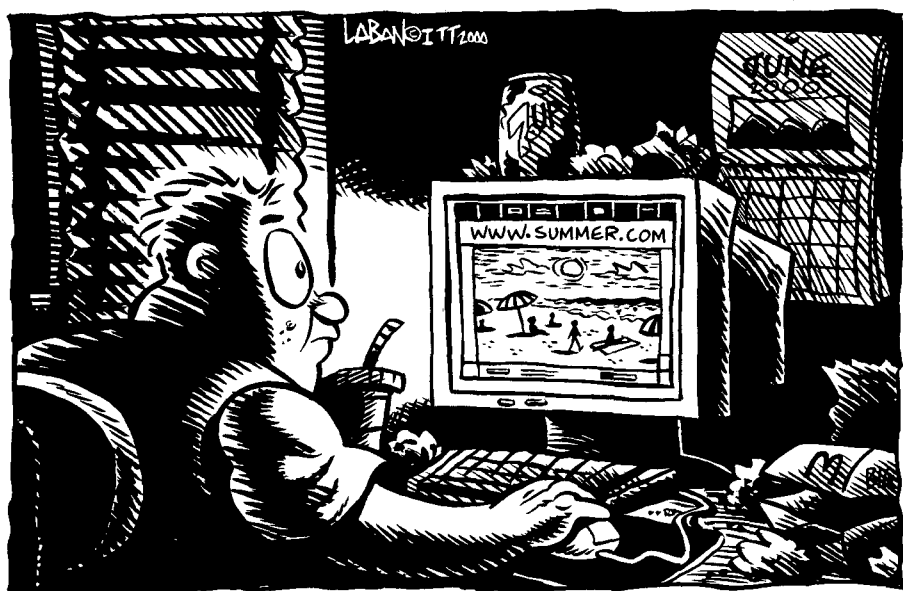
Meanwhile in the Senate, which already has passed its version of the bill, obtuse drug warriors are readying another assault on the Constitution. Florida Sen. Bob Graham has introduced legislation proposing similar measures for the drug ecstasy (MDMA), titled the Ecstasy Anti-Proliferation Act. Not only does this legislation inappropriately equate ecstasy with deadly meth, it reinforces the combat mentality that makes the war on drugs so disastrous.

This hopeless strategy has filled our

Pandering politicians want to sacrifice civil liberties for the lost cause of anti-drug warfare.

jails, corroded our culture and endangered our future. There are several steps we could take to craft more effective drug policies. Following European models, we could make drug treatment programs available to anyone who wants them, institute drug-maintenance programs, repeal mandatory-minimum penalties in drug cases and decriminalize marijuana, among other things. First, though, we must immediately end this destructive war. ■

Terry LaBan



Bully Culprit

Estrada is leading the Philippines into crisis

By James B. Goodno

Manila's massive malls usually provide respite from the city's heat and pollution, especially during the hot, dry spring. These days, however, the crowds stay away, afraid of being the next victims of a series of bombings that has swept the Philippines.

The sparsely populated shopping centers have become a symbol of a deepening political crisis. After years of inching toward stability, the Philippines' fragile democracy is in danger. Bombs have exploded in malls, airports and bus terminals. Kidnappings and warfare are ripping apart the south. Complaints of corruption and cronyism at the highest levels of government have resurfaced. And confidence in the government of former actor Joseph Estrada has collapsed. "He is the worst calamity that ever hit the nation," says Popoy Lagman, leader of a militant labor federation.

While that may be an overstatement—dictator Ferdinand Marcos caused his share of mayhem—it's an opinion shared by a large portion of the population. Fewer than 45 percent of Filipinos find Estrada's performance satisfactory.

Besides the Islamic south, where a civil war is raging, opposition is especially strong among the upper and middle classes, the influential Roman Catholic Church and the organized movements of the poor. The upper class largely views Estrada as a public embarrassment, expressing its long-held opinion in the media, casual conversation and jokes. The president is often denigrated for his drinking habits and his poor English skills. (When I had dinner at Estrada's home in the late '80s, our meal was lubricated with a considerable amount of San Miguel beer, but his English—while not impeccable—was perfectly serviceable.)

More seriously, Estrada is close with Marcos-era cronies, such as Lucio Tan and Eduardo Cojuangco, who he has repositioned at the commanding heights of the Philippine economy. Since Estrada came to power, Tan has gained control of 46 percent of the stock in the Philippine National Bank, due to a murky deal with the national government. The administration also restricted Taiwanese competition with Tan-controlled Philippine Airlines. Estrada allowed Cojuangco to retake control of the San Miguel corporation, despite ongoing legal action challenging his original Marcos-era takeover of the food and beverage giant. These and other moves have led local business executives and foreign investors to ques-

and Fidel Ramos stepped up their criticism. And left-wing protesters took to the streets in increasing numbers—most notably on May Day, when labor organizations brought more than 50,000 workers out to protest Estrada's policies.

Meanwhile, the long-festering conflict on Mindanao and surrounding southern islands exploded, with battles between the Philippine military and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) raging on major highways. Hundreds have been killed and more than 240,000 individuals displaced. Meanwhile, Abu Sayeff—quasi-political bandits who claim to be fighting for independence—are holding Filipino, European and Malaysian hostages in their jungle camps. (The government has accused MILF of the bombings in Manila, but doubts about these charges are widespread.)

Conflict in Mindanao has its roots in the economic and political marginalization of the Islamic community there. Muslims make up roughly 5 percent of the whole Philippine population. Once a majority in the south, Muslims now make up only 20 percent of the population due to migration from the overwhelmingly Catholic north.



Philippine President Joseph Estrada (center) in Mindanao.

tion Estrada's commitment to an economy free of favoritism.

Among lower-income groups, support for the self-styled populist has eroded as economic conditions have grown tougher. In the 1998 election, Estrada received the bulk of his support from the lower classes. But as president, Estrada has done little for the poor. Amid the Asian financial crisis and the pressures of globalization, Estrada has favored his cronies over small farmers, capital over consumers and multinational institutions over workers.

Earlier this year, opposition to Estrada mounted in Manila. Affluent critics and business executives called for Estrada's resignation. The Catholic Church and allies of former presidents Cory Aquino

Those portions of Mindanao still predominantly Muslim are among the poorest areas of the Philippines. A 1998 Asian Development Bank study noted that Mindanao's Muslim enclaves lag behind the rest of the nation in almost all aspects of socioeconomic development. What's more, the Philippine government lacks any Muslim senators, cabinet secretaries or Supreme Court justices.

The most promising development in the south came in 1996, when the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which launched the fight for self-determination in the '70s, and the Ramos government agreed to establish an autonomous region in the Muslim parts of Mindanao and hold a referendum to further establish self-rule. But

now the agreement is widely viewed as a failure: The MILF opposes it, the plebiscite has not been held and economic investment continues to lag. Even the MNLF, which controls the autonomous government and is now imbedded in other official institutions, is questioning its success. Nur Misuari, MNLF chairman and governor of the autonomous region, recently said his organization might rejoin the independence movement.

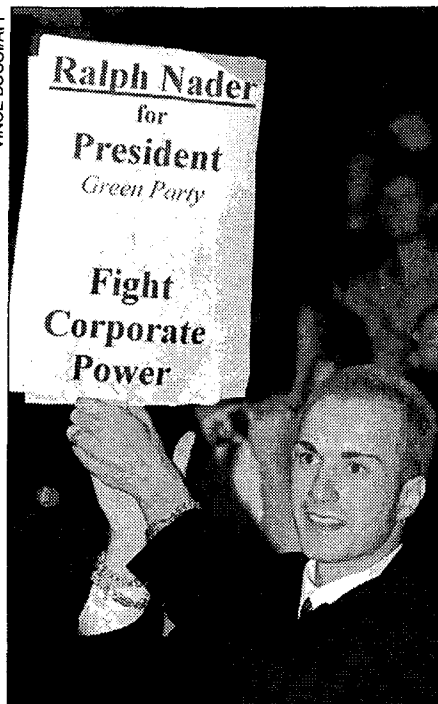
The Estrada government has pursued occasional talks with the MILF, but its commitment to peace is doubtful. Estrada—who cultivates a tough guy image—has built alliances with Christian opponents of the 1996 autonomy deal. His main approach to the conflict has been a military one, sending troops into battle and rebuffing calls for a cease-fire. He's now planning to ask for increased military assistance from the United States when he visits Washington in July.

Resolving the conflict in Mindanao is critical to addressing the broader national crisis. While Estrada has emphasized war, mounting pressure for peace from within the Philippines and from foreign trading partners—including the United States—could lead his government to shift gears and pursue a settlement. Estrada might not be the brightest man in Philippine politics, but he does have political sense and some shrewd advisers who do not want to see the crisis escalate, especially with midterm congressional elections scheduled for next year.

Right now, the political opposition is not positioned to seize power from the president. With Estrada's party in control of Congress, impeachment is out of the question. Next year's elections could change the balance of power, but even opposition success would not make the impeachment a simple or sure thing. For its part, the left, which broke into several revolutionary and reform-oriented factions in the '80s and '90s, lacks the muscle to remove Estrada from office.

A deepening crisis could ultimately result in a coup or an assassination, neither of which would be in the interest of Philippine democracy. Unfortunately, neither is the mess that is the Estrada government. ■

VINCE BUCCI/AFIP



Three's Company

Third parties strategize for the November elections

By John Nichols

MADISON, WISCONSIN—Venting the mix of frustration and optimism that goes with the presidential nominee of a party consigned to the political minor leagues, Socialist David McReynolds scolded the Democratic and Republican parties. "Shame on the two parties, 'major' only in numbers, but in every moral and intellectual sense minor parties," McReynolds explained to a crowd that needed no convincing at the fifth National Independent Politics Summit.

A loose federation of more than 30 parties and political groups from across the country, for five years the Independent Progressive Political Network (IPPN) has gone about the difficult task of forging a left-wing alternative to the nation's duopoly politics. The group's June gathering at the University of Wisconsin drew together 135 organizers largely working at the local level.

That's where Ted Glick, IPPN's national coordinator, sees the most compelling evidence of a renewed

progressive political force in America. Pointing to the recent linking of the District of Columbia Statehood Party and the D.C. Greens, the muscular red-green coalition behind the new Vermont Progressive Party, as well as partnerships between New Party and Green stalwarts in Madison and other cities, Glick says that the old image of a divided left is fading at the grassroots. "On a national level, it's still very hard to bring groups together," Glick says. "But at the local level, we're seeing a lot of the barriers come down. There's a convergence of a number of different groups who are starting to build an electoral component to the activism that came out of last fall's anti-WTO protests in Seattle."

Karen Kubby, a Socialist who served a decade on the city council in Iowa City, Iowa and presented a seminar on seeking local office to several dozen prospective third-party candidates, agrees. "There's more energy now," she says. "I think a lot more people are willing to think outside the major-party box—not just at the local level, but nationally."

Kubby's right. The 1992 and 1996 presidential elections both saw more than 10 percent of the electorate cast ballots for third party candidates—the first time that has happened in two consecutive elections since before the Civil War, when a new party that called itself "Republican" was taking shape. A recent Rasmussen Research poll found that, in a race where a third-party candidate would have a legitimate chance of winning, 26 percent of likely voters would be inclined to back that candidate—as opposed to 30 percent who would stick with a Democrat and 25 percent for the Republican. That figure represents a five-year high for third-party sympathy—up from the previous high of 17 percent in 1998. "I think there is a real change in the political climate," says Baldemar Velásquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and a leader in efforts to form an independent Labor Party. "Working people are getting disenchanted. They're looking for an alternative."

While IPPN member parties work to capitalize on that sentiment at the local level, the Association of State Green Parties is staging a national offensive. Green presidential candidate Ralph Nader is well on the way to winning a

expenses and must report any felons they are in contact with. All have filed appeals of their sentences.

Kissinger was denied permission to go to Philadelphia last month to speak at a rally on the 15th anniversary of the police bombing of the MOVE residence, where 11 people, including five children, were burned to death and an entire city block was destroyed. "My probation officer said he'd have to check with the district court," Kissinger says. "He said when they let

people travel, they have to assess third party risk. Apparently our decision to take our case to court instead of pleading guilty constitutes a threat to third parties."

Kissinger calls the sentences a blatant attempt by federal prosecutors and the court "to stop our political work for Mumia" and vows "it won't work."

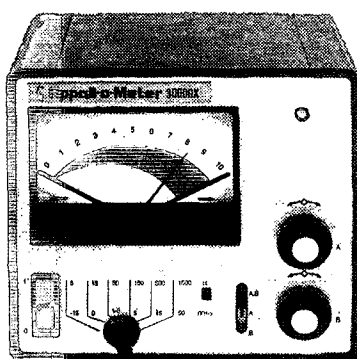
Former South African political prisoner and Abu-Jamal supporter Dennis Brutus, commenting on the sentences, says, "As someone who suffered various restraints, including loss of passport, I am profoundly troubled to see apartheid [tactics] replicated in the United States." ■

Pass the Petition

In Michigan, a Republican leads a statewide campaign to legalize marijuana

By Ted Kleine

VANDALIA, MICHIGAN—The poster for HempAid 2000, a Memorial Day pot party at Rainbow Farm, showed a clean-cut couple setting a "Marijuana Welcomed" mat on their front porch. Past HempAids have featured hippie



Appall-o-Meter

By David Futrelle

Cover Up 8.9

The police chief of Islamabad, Pakistan has come up with a plan to keep the streets of his city safe from crime: He wants women to refrain from laughing when outside their homes. By covering their heads, dressing prudishly and generally keeping a low profile, Police Chief Nasir Durrani explained in a recent speech to a local women's college, women will be able to escape the attention of potential thieves and sex criminals. "Keep a serious and stern expression on your faces when you go to the market, parks and other public places," Durrani told the students, according to The Associated Press.

If the criminals still take notice of the somber women, too bad: In Pakistan, women are routinely jailed after reporting rapes, accused by their attackers of having consensual sex outside of marriage.

Dead Air 6.4

Oops! The editors of the *Seattle Times* didn't mean to put that "Deaths and Funerals" headline from the obituary pages over an ad in the paper for Alaska Airlines. The paper has apologized for what it says was an honest-to-goodness (if darkly ironic) production mistake.

But the airline, bristling at the paper's ongoing investigations into the causes of the crash of Alaska Airlines Flight 261 in

January, suspects the alleged production mishap was more than a "coincidence," telling Reuters that the paper's coverage of the crash—which killed all 88 people on board—was so biased and reckless that it "fostered an environment where somebody felt it was appropriate, even for a few moments, to place that logo on the ad."

Alaska Air might want to spend more time on safety and less reading the papers: In addition to the January crash, the company saw one of its baggage handlers crushed to death on the tarmac at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in May.

Smuggler's Blues 7.9

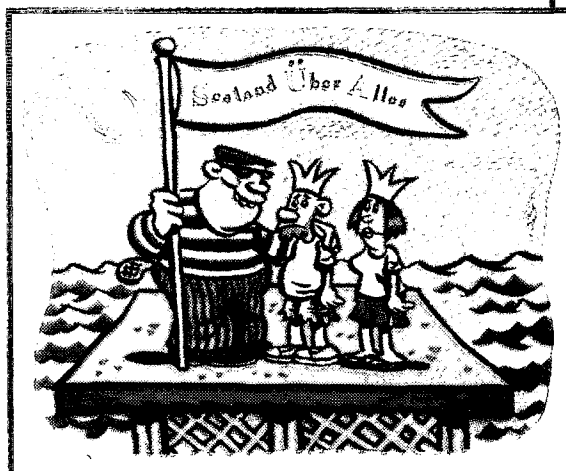
Something's rotten in the state of Sealand. In the late '60s, eccentric British adventurer and pirate radio enthusiast Roy Bates took over an abandoned military gun platform in the North Sea and declared it to be the independent principality of Sealand, making himself and his wife the rulers of the roost and issuing passports with the new country's coat of arms.

Now "Prince Roy" and "Princess Joan" find themselves embroiled in a bizarre international scandal. It seems that Spanish

drug smugglers have begun selling Sealand passports of their own and claiming diplomatic immunity when arrested by Spanish police. The latest twist in the case: Spanish authorities say criminals claiming to be Sealand officials tried to buy \$50 million of arms from Russia, including fighter planes, helicopters and tanks.

To enhance the ruse, the smugglers planned to don military costumes. "The false regent of Sealand had ordered a tailor to draw up a design for a series of battle uniforms for the principality, reserving one with the rank of Colonel for himself," the Spanish civil guards said in a statement.

Clearly, dangerous weapons and snazzy uniforms of this sort should only be in the hands of responsible authorities, like the real rulers of the fake country of Sealand.



TERRY LABAN

music and camping in the farm's clover-flecked meadows. But this year's event was also a political rally for the Personal Responsibility Amendment (PRA), a ballot proposal that would give Michigan the most liberal marijuana laws in America. Petitions were passed around like pipes, and by the end of the weekend, 550 revelers had signed their names. "We're getting overwhelming response," says Derrick DeCraene, Rainbow Farm's entertainment coordinator.

The PRA has the support of an odd bag of anti-government Michiganders. All the head shops, from the Glass Onion in Kalamazoo to Su Casa Boutique in Lansing, have PRA petitions on their counters. The amendment, which needs 302,711 signatures (10 percent of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election) to get on the November ballot, would make it legal to possess three ounces of dried marijuana and three plants.

The chief architect of the amendment is Saginaw attorney Gregory Schmid, a self-described "conservative Republican" who last stuck it to the state when he helped pass term limits for legislators in 1992. "We have a huge libertarian

movement and a healthy disrespect for government in our state," Schmid says. "Some people call us 'Militiagan.'"

Schmid introduced the amendment because he's livid at police, prosecutors and judges who are shanghaiing potheads into the prison system. "The War on Drugs is a \$50 billion fraud on the taxpayers," he says. "It's poison for America. It feeds the growth of bureaucracies."

If the PRA gets on the ballot, Schmid predicts it will get 55 percent of the vote, a figure he deduced from the support for medical marijuana initiatives in other states. Seven states and the District of Columbia have voted to allow doctor-prescribed marijuana. The following year, a Gallup poll found that 73 percent of Americans thought it was O.K. to smoke marijuana as long as you had a note from your physician.

What's in a Name?

The School of the Americas, the 54-year-old base notorious for training some of the worst human rights violators in Latin America, is getting a makeover. Over the past decade, thousands have demonstrated at the Ft. Benning, Georgia compound, protesting what they call "The School of Assassins."

In May, House members rejected an amendment to temporarily close the school after strenuous lobbying by the Army, the Pentagon and the Clinton administration. Instead, the Army will give the school a new image under the guise of the Defense Institute for Hemispheric Security Cooperation. The plan calls for mild congressional oversight of the school, monitoring by the Department of Defense and required studies in "human rights" in the curriculum.

But critics say these changes are no more than an exercise in public relations. "Even with a new coat of paint, the School of the Americas has trained far too many killers of innocent people to remain a part of our foreign policy," Rep. John J. Moakley (D-Mass.), one of the amendment's sponsors, told the *New York Times*.

School of the Americas graduates include Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson and Col. Lima Estrada, who was arrested earlier this year for the 1998 murder of a Guatemalan human rights leader.

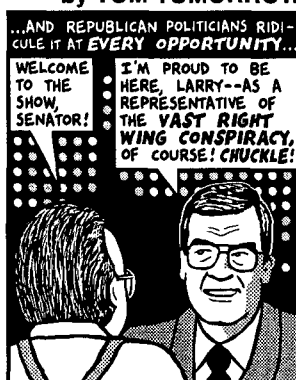
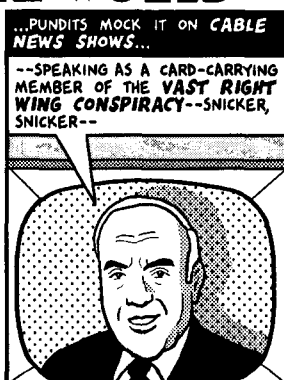
Sheryl Fred

Back down on the farm, owner Tom Crosslin and manager Doug Leinbach have more personal reasons for supporting the PRA. Crosslin has a brother-in-law who spent seven years in an Indiana prison for a dope deal. Leinbach quit a banking job after his employer told him he'd have to take a urine test. "I was corporate banker for nine years, and I smoked marijuana every day," says Leinbach, who has grown his gray hair long and shed his suit in favor of a baseball cap and jeans. "I didn't do it at work. I did it after work to relieve stress."

Both men agree with Schmid that Michigan is ready for liberal marijuana laws. They may be right. Michigan is the Midwest's answer to Oregon: a state peopled by back-to-the-land environmentalists, anti-death penalty progressives and paranoid right-wing militia members arming themselves against an invasion by the United Nations. The only pocket of true Middle American conservatism is in Grand Rapids, the heartland of the Michigan Republican Party. "People in Michigan want to come out to the country, enjoy their freedom and get away from the constraints of the city," Leinbach says. "Michigan's always been liberal in that respect." ■

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



On Strike and in Style

By Travis Loller

Irina Arellano has always been a stylish revolutionary. Six years ago, when she first arrived in the Bay Area, she was a green-haired, pierced punk rocker who had come to California from Mexico hoping to find work and fellow vegetarians.

Last March the 26-year-old came back, this time as a graphic-design student wearing baggy pants and a pony tail. She was in California on a speaking tour representing students at Mexico City's National Autonomous University of Mexico, or UNAM, the largest university in Latin America, with a quarter of a million students. A strike there last April over a proposed tuition hike shut down the campus for nine months. "I came to let people know what is happening," she says. "Because even though the strike was big news in Mexico, the American press has ignored us."

Growing up in a political household, Arellano has been intensely interested in class politics since she was a teen-ager. At 13, she started listening to punk rock, became a vegetarian and got involved in animal rights issues—not a typical introduction to politics in Mexico. In 1992, when Arellano enrolled in UNAM's university-affiliated High School Number Six, she helped organize a one-day strike to protest the university rector's proposal to raise tuition and make structural changes that would mostly affect poorer students.

Two years after her initial brush with activism at UNAM, she made her first trip to the United States to see Berkeley and San Francisco in 1994. Like many young leftists, she thought of the Bay Area as a mecca of progressive politics and tolerance. Arellano spent the summer organizing against California's infamous Proposition 187—ex-Governor Pete Wilson's attempt to deny

health care, education and other basic services to immigrants.

By the time UNAM rector Francisco Barnés de Castro announced another plan to raise tuition in 1999, Arellano, now in college, was prepared to fight the neoliberal proposals. She and her fellow students attempted to negotiate



municate with the public about their cause. "To go and talk to people about what they were really thinking about you and your struggle—that was a very powerful experience," Arellano says.

Despite these efforts, six months into the strike there had still been no useful dialogue between students and the administration. Arellano and others held a citywide referendum asking students and locals whether Barnés should step down. "After that," she says, "he actually quit his job."

The new rector, Juan de la Fuente, was no more willing to negotiate than his predecessor. Soon after taking office, he held a plebiscite to gauge support for ending the strike. In response, the strikers held their own referendum. Both sides claimed victory, each accusing the other of fraud. But de la Fuente used his plebiscite statistics to justify state intervention. On February 6, the rector called in police, who broke the strike by arresting close to 1,000 students (eight of whom are still in prison).

Irina Arellano

without success, so they voted to strike. Arellano was part of the students' general strike council, a group of 120 students of varying political tendencies, who agreed that everyone would have a voice in decision-making.

During the strike, Arellano and her peers occupied campus classrooms and offices (there are almost no dorms at UNAM), regularly meeting in small groups for discussions that sometimes lasted for days at a time. Time not spent in these marathon meetings was devoted to the logistics of taking care of thousands of people suddenly living at the university. Arellano, who camped out at the graphic-design building, said her fellow strikers took turns cooking, cleaning and shopping for necessities.

One of the most important jobs was collecting money to support the strike by soliciting on city buses and subways. This also gave the strikers a chance to com-

Nonetheless, Arellano insists that popular support for the strike council and its goals continues to be strong. "If you can have a march with more than half a million people, that means a lot," she says. "We have support everyday from unions, from students of other public universities, from teachers of other public universities or schools. People as young as 12 participate actively."

In recent months, authorities finally opened a dialogue with the students to discuss their demands for reform. Arellano doesn't expect the exchanges to directly solve the university's problems. Instead, she says, the real value of the dialogues is that they are being broadcast on the university radio to all of Mexico City. One of the students' biggest problems during the strike was getting their point of view heard in the government-controlled media. Now, Arellano says, "people see what is really going on, who is really violent, who are the real intransigents." ■

Enemies of the State

For more than 40 years, the FBI pursued a secret campaign of surveillance, disruption and repression against Puerto Rico's independence movement—but the full story is only now coming out.

In March, FBI Director Louis Freeh stunned a congressional budget hearing by conceding that his agency had violated the civil rights of many Puerto Ricans over the years and had engaged in "egregious illegal action, maybe criminal action." "Particularly in the '60s, the FBI did operate a program that did tremendous destruction to many people, to the country, and certainly to the FBI," Freeh said in response to questions from Bronx Rep. Jose Serrano, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the FBI budget.

To redress past injustices, Freeh told Serrano he was ordering virtually all agency files on the secret campaign declassified and made public. A few weeks later, he notified Serrano that the FBI's Puerto Rico file—some 1.8 million documents—was being prepared for him, with only the names of living informants blacked out.

On May 17, two FBI agents delivered the first installment on that promise—8,600 pages in four plain cardboard boxes—and the following day Serrano allowed me an exclusive look at what's inside. These documents and the hundreds of thousands to come are sure to provide a gold mine of information on how the federal government thwarted genuine self-determination efforts in this nation's most-important colony.

Files in the first batch mostly concern the agency's longtime pursuit of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico and its fiery leader Pedro Albizu Campos, who died in 1965 after spending several decades in and out of prison on terrorism and sedition charges.

The first FBI agent arrived in Puerto Rico in 1936, after the local U.S. attorney, A. Cecil Snyder, complained to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover that Albizu was doing terrible things like publishing "articles insulting the United States" and giving "public speeches in favor of independence." Although he had no

proof, Snyder told Hoover he suspected Albizu was behind several unsolved bombings of federal buildings. Within months of the first agent's arrival, Albizu and several top party leaders were indicted, convicted of sedition and hauled off to a federal prison.



In 1943, Albizu was paroled. The documents show he moved to New York City and refused to report to a parole officer. But the Roosevelt administration, against the wishes of Hoover and the Justice Department, would not order him back to prison for fear of unrest on the island.

The biggest bombshells in these first boxes, however, have little to do with surveillance and persecution of the Nationalists. Among the most surprising files:

- November 11, 1940: Hoover writes the FBI's San Juan office ordering it to "obtain all information of a pertinent character ... concerning Luis Muñoz Marin and his associates." Muñoz, the most popular Puerto Rican leader of the 20th century, was then president of the Puerto Rican Senate. He would become the island's first elected governor and the father of its commonwealth constitution. The FBI kept him under surveillance for more than 20 years, with agents compiling information about his personal debts and mistresses.

- June 12, 1961: After giving his San Juan agents the green light for a campaign to disrupt the independence movement, Hoover writes: "To appraise the caliber of leadership in the Puerto Rican independence

movement, particularly as it pertains to our efforts to disrupt their activities and compromise their effectiveness, we should have intimate detailed knowledge of the most influential leaders. ... We must have information concerning their weaknesses, morals, criminal records, spouses, children, family life and personal activities."

- December 21, 1961: A San Juan agent notifies Hoover that he has met with the editor of *El Mundo* newspaper and gotten him to agree to publish an editorial condemning a radical university group called FUPI. The editor agrees not to disclose that the paper's editorial was authored by the FBI.

Serrano says, "For such a small population, Puerto Ricans must be the most investigated people in history."

COINTELPRO, the FBI's infamous '60s program to disrupt dissident groups, had a far more devastating impact in Puerto Rico than in the States. The commonwealth government has already admitted that—with the help of FBI and military intelligence agencies—it illegally kept files on more than 140,000 pro-independence dissidents. Many of those

"For such a small population, Puerto Ricans must be the most investigated people in history."

dissidents were subsequently blacklisted and for years were unable to find jobs.

Some key questions are still unanswered. Among them is whether the FBI or other federal intelligence agencies were involved in torture and radiation experiments on Albizu while he was back in jail in the early '50s, as his family and closest supporters have long alleged. Questions also remain about what role the agency had in a spate of bombings and assassinations aimed at independence leaders during the '60s and '70s.

It will take months, maybe years, for historians to ferret through the 1.8 million documents. As usual in this country, the truth is revealed long after the damage has been done. ■

TEMP SLAVE REVOLT

Contingent Workers of the World Unite

By **David Moberg**
SEATTLE

After a few weeks as a product designer at Microsoft, 26-year-old Ed Campodonico wondered out loud to his office mate why there wasn't a union for temporary employees like them. "Dude," his partner replied edgily, "you can't talk about that."

But Campodonico, who grew up in a union family, did talk about it. So have a small but growing number of other skilled computer workers who hold temporary jobs in this global software center and do not have the rights and benefits of regular employees, even after years of working virtually full-time for the same company. Their innovative union, the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers, or WashTech, is confronting two of the most important trends in the American workplace—the information technology boom and the rising importance of contingent workers, a catch-all phrase for part-time, temporary, contract, lease or other nonstandard employees.

WashTech was born in 1997 after a few Microsoft "permatemps" were outraged that the Washington Software Alliance, an industry lobbying group, had persuaded the state labor department to deny overtime pay protection to a large swath of well-paid software engineers. Now affiliated with the Communications Workers of America, WashTech organizers are seeking new ways of giving a voice to workers who do not fit into existing labor laws and organizations.

"We're trying to create a new model of unionism," says Marcus Courtney, co-founder of WashTech. "In this industry, collective bargaining is not an attainable goal right now. That's not going to preclude us from organizing and building power for workers on the job, at the legislative level and in the community. If we play by the rules, we'll never win. So we're going to build a new kind of worker organization that works for this industry and new-economy jobs."

In May, WashTech joined with about 40 other worker advocacy organizations, ranging from the AFL-CIO to the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, to form the National Alliance For Fair Employment (NAFFE). Although the day laborers, software designers and adjunct professors represented by groups in NAFFE might seem to have little in common, all contingent workers—about 30 percent of the work force—lack many of the rights or legal protections of standard employees. Contingent workers also typically have less pay, benefits and security than comparable standard workers who often work alongside them; while they are twice as likely as regular workers to receive poverty-level wages, even skilled and well-paid contingent workers are short-changed. Regular workers lose out as well, since the contingent work force can be used to drive down their pay and working conditions.

Since temp and some other contingent work has increased even during a boom time, when more workers normally would be added to full-time payrolls, its future growth seems likely. Seventy percent of businesses surveyed by the American Management Association in 1999 reported having replaced some permanent workers with temps, and two-thirds said they planned to increase some form of contingent staffing in the next five years. Much of the recent growth of contingent work reflects an attempt by the most-powerful corporations to shift as many risks as possible to their employees and dependent businesses and to avoid responsibilities for workers and the potential claims they might make by organizing or demanding their legal rights. Indeed, it is often unclear who (if anyone) is legally considered their employer—which is precisely what businesses want.

While WashTech is still small—it has 260 dues-paying members, working at more than 70 Seattle-area companies, and 1,700 subscribers to its electronic newslet-

ter—it frequently exposes abusive practices of companies like Microsoft and Amazon.com as well as the temporary employment agencies. Its criticisms have already led to improved employment agency benefit packages for temps. It also has launched surprisingly effective, if not yet victorious, legislative battles for investigation and regulation of the temporary employment industry, such as a proposal that agencies must reveal the fee they collect from each temp worker's contract.

Microsoft insists that the temps it controls and selects are actually employed by the agencies, which often do little more than cut paychecks and skim off a large fee. It's a typical gambit in the world of contingent work, where the definition of employee varies from law to law and case to case. However, Microsoft has been judged to be an employer of temps in several important instances. Earlier this year, under pressure from WashTech, the state ordered Microsoft to let temp workers see their personnel files, which the company would not open because it claimed it was not their employer. (WashTech is still fighting to make Microsoft comply.)

Meanwhile, in a complicated lawsuit initiated in 1992, federal courts have decided that Microsoft was indeed the common-law employer of certain longtime independent contractors and permatemps paid through the agencies. As a result, the workers should have been entitled to participate in the company's discount stock purchase plan open to all employees. The court has not yet ruled on the workers' claims for 401 (k) retirement benefits, health insurance or

mandated breakup for antitrust violations—to change its policies for the roughly 6,000 temp workers who make up about one-third of its Seattle-area work force. Microsoft has begun to reduce its number of temps but also has required that temps work no more than a year before being separated from the company for 100 days—an effort to protect itself

“We had to overcome this idea that labor unions were only for people who hated their jobs.”

from future lawsuits rather than address the basic issues of fairness. Until a judge rebuked the company, Microsoft even tried to force temp workers to sign contracts that would have precluded sharing in the benefits of the lawsuit settlement.

Unlike many temp workers who are immersed in poverty, most software engineers and editors, even the temps, typically earn \$60,000 a year or more—and they often love their work. “We had to overcome this idea that labor unions were only for people who hated their jobs,” Courtney says.

But temps are often upset about being treated as second-class workers and the parasitic role of the employment agencies. Often workers find their own jobs, then are forced to work through a specific agency that provides them nothing. Besides seeking health insurance and training to stay on top of a fast-changing industry, many software workers want some control over the long hours of overtime that have become the industry standard.

Still, the idea of collective action is alien to most young high-tech workers, especially temps who are often quite isolated from each other and rapidly churn through jobs. “We start not even at square one, but at negative three,”

explains Mike Blain, co-founder and president of WashTech. “The negative baggage is especially heavy in information technology, with its maverick, libertarian culture, which believes you succeed by being smart, working hard, keeping trained and moving around—and if you don't succeed, it's your fault.”



vacation pay. Nor has the court decided on the damages Microsoft owes an estimated group of at least 10,000 workers. WashTech is not formally involved in the lawsuits, but some of its members are plaintiffs.

Pressure from the lawsuits and WashTech have led Microsoft—which has even bigger headaches with the court-

WashTech treasurer Barbara Kempf finds less outright opposition than unwillingness to join and pay dues without a clear, immediate payback. But despite the frustrating, slow pace of WashTech membership growth, Courtney sees economic security as a "molten lava issue below the surface," especially if the soaring fortunes of recent years go sour. "A lot of people are basing their futures on the jackpot economy," he says.

Indeed, earlier this year interest in WashTech picked up at Amazon.com, when the company had its first layoffs and where compensation packages have been scaled down from the start-up days. Discontent even rose among full-time Microsoft workers when its stock price dropped sharply this spring.

The building trades unions may provide the best model for the information technology sector. High-tech unions could flourish by organizing the supply of trained workers to the industry and helping workers with their career development. With advanced software skills in great demand, workers so far have counted on continued training and job mobility more than a voice on the job, but few companies provide the training that workers need, especially for temps. As a result, WashTech's training programs have been popular. Although it has relied heavily on local colleges, it also may tap into new training partnerships of CWA with companies like Cisco Systems. "That's becoming a core central mission of our organization," Blain says. "Offering training has been the most effective recruitment tool."

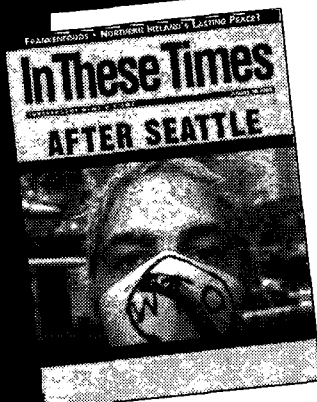
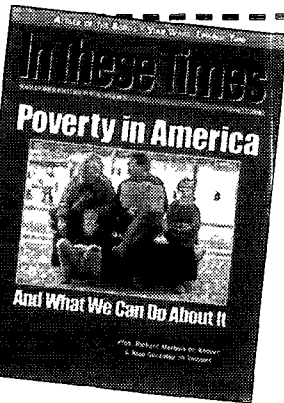
Unlike the building trades, WashTech can't legally negotiate the kind of contracts that establish the terms of employment, but it does hope to set minimum terms for everyone in the high-tech industry—whether permanent, temp or contract workers—and to regulate employment agencies. It also plans to establish a worker-owned, cooperative employment agency that could serve workers better than the for-profit agencies do.

Tim Costello, director of the Campaign on Contingent Work, a Boston-based NAFPE affiliate, thinks that temporary work—especially through employment agencies—will be one of the most promising targets for the new national movement. NAFPE is likely to push for both new state-level regulation of agencies and for a voluntary code of conduct, which could be implemented through campaigns against the major corporate employers of temps. Although national labor law revisions could greatly help organizing of contingent workers, employers are likely to fight fiercely any restrictions on one of their favorite cost-cutting strategies.

Though WashTech often seems like a gnat alongside the Microsoft elephant, Blain says, its impact could be amplified if it were part of a national effort. NAFPE is a step in the right direction, but it would help if there were more groups like WashTech. "Workers like the idea of WashTech," Courtney adds. "But if you shout, 'Is anybody out there?' there's no echo."

There are plenty of people out there—nearly a third of the work force—but they haven't yet heard the call for contingent workers of the world to unite. ■

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END

HEAR

Can the Mexican opposition finally topple the PRI?

by Nick Rockwell

San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico

A month before Mexico's presidential election, Father Gonzalo Ituarte is preaching to a church filled with his flock, the indigenous and mestizo residents of San Cristobal de las Casas. In an island of light in the dark church, the priest tells a story about the conquistadors and how the local Indians carried on after the Spanish took their land. It isn't hard to divine that his metaphor is really about the country's current power structure.

A few blocks away from the church, in the town square, the headline on a copy of *Cuarto Poder*, a regional newspaper, screams: "Attack!" The lead story is about Subcomandante Marcos, the famous guerrilla leader, and his predictions that Mexico's ruling party will move to crush his forces after they win the July 2 election. But many in San Cristobal don't seem to be worried. They say calm will prevail because they believe Mexico's opposition will finally win an election for the first time since the Mexican Revolution.

Could this be the election that finally ends one-party rule in Mexico? For more than 70 years, the country has been run by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the party with the longest stretch of uninterrupted national rule in the world. Mainstream media on both sides of the border are trumpeting the candidacy of Vicente Fox Quesada of the conservative National Action Party (PAN) as the force that will finally topple the PRI's aging, creaky political machine.

Fox leads a pack of candidates in some polls by significant margins of more than five percentage points. And most polls showed that Fox easily won the only televised presidential debate in April. Mexicans seem to enjoy the strapping former Coca-Cola executive for his cowboy boots and easy-going but sarcastic manner. Fox has called PRI candidate Francisco

Bicycle taxis in Mexico City adorned with portraits of PRI presidential candidate Francisco Labastida.

Labastida Ochoa "shorty" and challenged his machismo. Mexicans are unaccustomed to such insolence from challengers so close to election day.

Despite Fox's strong showing, the PRI should never be counted out. "In Mexico, we have a saying," explains Roberto Chaporro, a PRI supporter who sells construction equipment in Mexico City. "If the PRI is going to lose, the PRI is going to steal."

"Don't think so badly of us," Chaporro adds. "Corruption is everywhere in the system, and the opposition is not immune." Chaporro's words bear remembering. Politicians of all stripes suffered through corruption scandals once opposition forces started taking control of municipal and state governments during the '90s.

But Mexicans should also remember the 1988 election, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Solorzano of the left-wing Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) gave the PRI a close run at the polls. Many political observers believe Cárdenas actually won that election. Cárdenas, who went on to become mayor of Mexico City, is running again in this year's race, his third attempt at the presidency. But if the pre-election polls are any indication, his time may have passed. In most polls, he barely wins 15 percent of the electorate.

Some political observers caution that the true strength of Mexico's left is often undervalued in polls taken mainly by telephone in a culture where the average voter may be too shy to knock the ruling party. However, Cárdenas has found his image as a dour, perennial presidential loser a hard one to shake, and the disorganization and infighting of Mexico's left have further undercut his efforts. Prominent political analysts like Jorge Castaneda, who previously supported Cárdenas, are now in Fox's camp. They see him as the only opposition can-

didate with a chance against the PRI. Castaneda and others have urged Cárdenas to drop out and officially back Fox, but the leader of Mexico's left wing has refused.

Those who think Fox is up against a wheezy political organization past its prime would be wise to refresh their political memories as well. Flashback six years to the last Mexican presidential election: In 1994, a year of assassination, uprising and economic crash, another PAN presidential candidate, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, seemed to handily win a televised debate and was close in the pre-election polls. Then, too, the conventional wisdom was the PRI could lose. At the time, despite the close race, former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (the man who steered the PRI to victory in the clouded 1988 election) was hailed by the international media as a champion of democracy, the leader who would finally give the country fair elections. (For a while, the Clinton administration even supported Salinas as candidate to head the World Trade Organization.)

In hindsight, that seems unbelievable. After Salinas left office, his administration was unmasked as one of the most corrupt in recent history. Analysis of Mexican media coverage during the 1994 race showed the television networks colluded with the government to slant coverage. The military intimidated voters in southern regions of the country, according to reports that eventually trickled out from human rights groups. But the bluster of the PAN's campaign evaporated, and the PRI's Ernesto Zedillo ascended to the presidency with the backing of a political machine that continued to use every available electoral trick.

This time around, Mexican election officials say things will be different. At a May conference in Washington sponsored by Johns Hopkins University and the Washington Office on Latin America, representatives of the Federal Election Institute (IFE) predicted the July vote would be fair and honest. They proceeded to invite the assembled crowd of policy wonks, bureaucrats, academics and journalists to come to Mexico to witness the process for themselves.

That's when Ted Lewis of the human rights group Global Exchange stood up. He asked if the invitation was sincere, since he had just been deported from Mexico for attempting to arrange trips for independent election observers. The response from the IFE officials, who became independent from the central government after the last election, had the ring of bureaucracy: They were not connected to matters of immigration but would look into his problem. Though Lewis may yet return as an observer, this small embarrassment is telling.

Indeed, the PRI seems to be up to its old tricks. Oscar Gonzalez, president of the Mexican Academy of Human Rights, complains that almost all television coverage has centered on the PRI. "The government has principally used TV to broadcast its point of view and propaganda," he says. "Labastida is using the media to intimidate his opposition."

The PRI insists the charges are unfounded. "It is completely absurd to say we don't have a paradise of democracy," says Carlos Almada, the PRI's secretary of elections. He points to the fact his party no longer controls the House of Deputies, the lower chamber of Mexico's Congress, and that "40 percent of Mexicans regularly vote with other parties."

This may be true, but the PRI expertly broke the opposition's bloc in Congress by using the party's control of the

Mexican Senate and picking up key opposition votes—which are splintered among a bevy of tiny parties—with promises backed by the PRI's control of the country's patronage system. Patronage and a sense of obligation to vote for the PRI in exchange for future favors are part of the legal fulcrum the party exerts on the electorate, Lewis adds.

And then there are the illegal means. The opposition worries most about the PRI's record of buying votes. "We Mexicans are hungry," warns Humberto Aguilar, electoral secretary of the PAN. "They can buy votes for 10 pesos." (Currently, a dollar is worth about nine pesos.)

Military intimidation in various regions of the country is still a concern as well, although Lewis predicts they will have a more



Opposition candidates Vicente Fox and Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas

low-key presence in this election. However, he adds, the United States "plays a big role" in supporting the militarization of Mexico's political and law enforcement systems as a way of maintaining a status quo that is good for stability and business. Chaporro, the construction equipment vendor, agrees. "Fox is out of his head if he thinks the United States will let him win," he says. "Keeping the PRI is good for business."

In Chiapas, a state where an unresolved guerrilla conflict simmers, there is a sense that the PRI will not go down without a fight. Elections in Mexico are often a masquerade to hide the autocratic nature of the nation's presidency and the oligarchy that consents to the president's appointment, says Father Ituarte, one of the leaders of Fray Bartolome de las Casas, the human-rights arm of the Catholic Church in the region. "We have a low-intensity democracy like we have a low-intensity conflict here," he quips.

Despite that reality, Ituarte is optimistic because the country's growing middle class and increasingly sophisticated organizations for civil society are slowly changing the political landscape. "Whether Labastida wins or not," he says, "civil society is advancing. This is becoming another country. Corruption and impunity may be our fashionable description now, but we are changing. Labastida is going to find out." ■

Rick Rockwell is a contributor to the new book Mexico: Facing the Challenges of Human Rights and Crime. Currently traveling in Mexico, he teaches journalism at American University.

Locked DOWN

Prison cutbacks leave inmates hopeless

By Kristin Eliasberg

By most accounts, Charles Hamilton was a model inmate at Green Haven Correctional Institute, a maximum-security prison in Stormville, New York. He lived on the "honor block," where he was given privileges as a reward for good behavior. Serving a 25-year-to-life sentence for second-degree murder and attempted robbery, he took advantage of virtually every outreach and education program at the prison, even as those programs were being gutted. Hamilton earned his GED, took college courses, worked in the law library, and organized fundraising drives to benefit New York's inner-city schools.

He was also president of an organization of inmates called Prisoners for a Calculated Transition, or PACT, which worked to establish connections with communities outside the prison walls, including Yale Law School. Twice a month, PACT hosted a discussion session among prisoners and students from the school. As the session moderator, Hamilton provided a revealing perspective; many of the students considered him an educator on par with their best professors.

But in early December, student visits were canceled because the prison was in lockdown. Rumors filtered out that inmates were organizing demonstrations, staging silent meal times, and wearing their "greens" prison-issue clothing instead of the more usual civilian garb they are allowed. According to a pamphlet by prisoners titled "Wake Up!" the demonstrations were protesting prison work conditions and New York Gov. George Pataki's "tough on parole" policies.

Alarmed by the protests, Green Haven administrators feared that an inmate strike was planned for New Year's Eve, timed to coincide with any Y2K-related system breakdowns. The fears intensified when gunpowder was found hidden in the ceiling of the gym. Officials at the prison responded by transferring 140 inmates. Without warning, one day after Thanksgiving, Hamilton was shipped to Attica, one of the harshest penitentiaries in the New York system.

In general, prisoners have few rights, and the right to choose their accommodations is not among them. Administrators can order transfers without citing reasons or granting a hearing. No one outside the Department of Corrections reviews these decisions. "The only rights that prisoners clearly have are the rights to safe and secure accommodations and enough food to eat," explains Jenni Gainsborough of the Sentencing Project. "Their free speech is limited; their letters are often read or censored. Any rights they may have are always trumped by security."

In Hamilton's case, it seems he was transferred because prison officials saw him as a leader of the Green Haven protest who had influence with the other inmates. Yet Hamilton insists he wasn't involved and steered clear of the inmates who were urging others to participate. Nevertheless, he was classified as a security risk. "It's the people like Charles—people who have been involved in programs—who are the ones they transfer," says Nancy Mahon, former director of the Center on Crime, Communities and Culture at the Open Society Institute. "They are perceived to be the organizers."

A sudden transfer is less serious than other fates that befall prisoners—death by beating, sexual assault or medical care so inadequate it's fatal, to cite some recent examples in New York. But what happened to Hamilton was a result of policy decisions about incarceration and crime-fighting whose effects on those inside and outside of prison are as disturbing as the most shocking prison scandals.

The United States today is putting more people in prison while doing less for them. The explosive growth of prison populations, cutbacks on spending for inmate programs and the denial of parole have combined to create a hopeless, embittered prison population. Inmates are rarely given resources to rebuild their lives or opportunities to learn skills

that could allow them to lead a crime-free existence after they're released.

Despite the popularity of "lock 'em up and throw away the key" sentiments, only a small percentage of inmates stay behind bars forever. Eventually, most prisoners are released. Prison services such as educational and vocational programs, adequate working conditions and drug counseling affect the kind of people the inmates will be when they get out. And it's not just inmates who suffer when programming is cut, or good-behavior incentives such as parole are removed. The society that prisoners will re-enter suffers, too.

When Hamilton arrived at Attica, he was put in solitary confinement because of "contraband" found in his bags—an essay about slavery that Hamilton had been allowed to keep at Green Haven. This harsh greeting was a reminder of what Attica used to be and a warning about what it is becoming again. Almost 30 years ago, Attica was the site of a horrific prison riot. Protesting overcrowding and censorship rules, inmates took several guards hostage and seized control of parts of the prison in a siege that lasted four days. Gov. Nelson Rockefeller responded by sending in state troopers, who killed 32 inmates and wounded 89 others; 11 prison employees being held as hostages also were killed.

In the aftermath of the riots, the state began to provide adequate living conditions for inmates and programs for education, outreach and other services designed to prepare prisoners for a return to life outside. The idea was to ensure that inmates would return to society with resources that could

prison beds (with another 1,500 beds due to be available in September), nine facility annexes and three prisons were added in the past 4 years. (It should be noted that 38 new prisons were built under three-term Democratic Gov. Mario Cuomo.) But under Pataki there has been no corresponding increase in the number of teachers, librarians and the like.



And New York spends no state or federal funds for higher education in prisons; the few programs that still exist are run by private colleges, using their own funding.

The state's current philosophy seems to be that anything given to prisoners—from recognition of their civil rights, to access to higher education, to cable TV—is something taken away from victims of their crimes. Legislation that would improve prison conditions, even if it might ensure that prisoners would be less crime-prone upon release, is viewed as an insult to the victims' memory. Evidence that those who participate in educational and social programs tend to do much better upon release doesn't seem to weigh in the balance. "Prison programs are given a negative spin like it's some kind of resort with free weightlifting," Mahon says. "The truth is most prisoners work all day, and if they do programs it's in addition to that."

Since taking office, Pataki also has engaged in a campaign to eviscerate the discretionary power of the parole board, if not to eliminate parole entirely. Throughout the '90s, rates of release for all inmates after their first appearance before the state parole board declined substantially, falling from 67.1 percent in 1994 to 41.5 percent in 1999. A federal law gives the state an incentive to lock up those convicted of violent crimes for longer periods. The Violent Criminal Incarceration Act, passed by Congress in 1995, allows states to qualify for federal funds if they have "truth in sentencing" laws that guarantee those convicted of violent crimes will serve on average 85 percent of their maximum sentences.

"People died here so that we could have clean water to drink and an education and a law library."

help them live differently the second time around. As Hamilton puts it, "People died here so that we could have clean water to drink and an education and a law library."

But in the past decade, many of the programs instituted in response to the riots have been severely cut back or terminated. In Pataki's first two years in office, his administration substantially reduced salaries for teachers, vocational instructors, librarians and drug counselors in all state facilities. The state inmate population has increased by 5,000 since his inauguration in 1995. To house them, 6,000 new

ILLUSTRATION: TERRY LABAN

New York is now receiving about \$40 million under this provision. This is despite studies by the New York Division of Parole showing that those locked up for violent offenses have the best record of any offenders on parole. New York also has eliminated its work-release program for parolees, which was fairly extensive and successful.

Since Hamilton's arrival at Attica, he has been released from solitary confinement. But he also has been denied the work assignments he requested, and books sent to him have been confiscated. And he has not been allowed to participate in any prison programs, on the grounds that he already did everything at Green Haven that Attica offers. While Hamilton won't be eligible for parole until 2007, he spends time preparing for his hearing. He has already accumulated an inch-high stack of certificates, diplomas and letters of recommendation. But according to Paul Gianelli, the court-appointed attorney in Hamilton's 1981 trial, "In today's climate, Charles has no chance of parole. They're not paroling anybody."

Hamilton's best hope for freedom may be a new trial. Though he is keenly aware that many inmates have claims of innocence, Hamilton's case does raise some serious questions. He was convicted of a murder that took place during the hold-up of a card game. The killer was described by witnesses as tall and right-handed; Hamilton is short and left-handed. But his conviction was secured by a bullet the arresting detective said he found in Hamilton's pocket the night he was arrested. The detective didn't produce the bul-

let until six months after the killing, and didn't say why Hamilton might have been carrying it three months after he had allegedly committed murder. A murder weapon was never produced. A subsequent state investigation singled out this detective as having "a convenient talent for producing crucial testimony and evidence at the eleventh hour." In addition, one of the witnesses who testified against Hamilton later recanted his testimony.

Inmates such as Hamilton who, as Gianelli puts it, "have the word 'life' at the ends of their sentences" may not get released, but others have finite sentences. And many of them will be ill-equipped to lead a crime-free life. Certainly they will be less well-prepared than someone like Hamilton, who had the benefit of vocational and educational programming that no longer exists.

From an inmate's perspective, the cutbacks in prisoner programs and the parole system have eliminated any incentive for change or redemption, leaving them angry and desperate. The demonstrations at Green Haven may be only a small hint of what's to come. "People close their eyes to the incarcerated," says Iris Hamilton, Charles' mother. "I know how easy that is, because I used to be that way, too. But then I realized it could happen to me. You've got to think about the other guy, walk in his shoes." ■

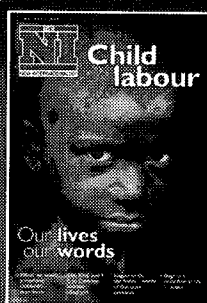
Kristin Eliasberg has written for The Nation, The Village Voice, the New York Times Book Review, Salon and other publications. She recently completed a Knight Journalism Fellowship at Yale Law School.

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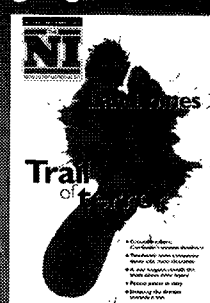
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Botched Burbs

By Sandy Zipp

What has happened to the American suburb? Once the utopian locale where city and country met, where nature and culture were brought into polite con-

Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream

By Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck
North Point Press
256 pages, \$30

Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened

By Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen
Basic Books
298 pages, \$27.50

versation, the suburb is no longer a pastoral borderland or even the mundane stage-set for middle America's sit-com fantasies.

Only a few generations since the heady days of postwar triumphalism, the friendly suburb has mutated into sinister sprawl. As Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck report in their recent manifesto *Suburban Nation*, those cheerful ranch houses arrayed in spotless, assembly-line rows on idyllic virgin land have mutated into swirling viruses of McMansions, garage-fronted stucco shacks and cul-de-sacs pushing their way relentlessly into imperiled wetlands and forest belts.

These much-heralded—and much-derided—pioneers of “new urbanist” architecture are confident that they have a popular antidote to sprawl. They are no doubt on to something, having made very successful careers out of stumping for a return to the “traditional neighborhood.” They claim this buried, longed-for tradition was the dominant form of Western habitation before the mid-20th century, originally evolving, they write, “organically as a response to human needs” in the form of “mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities of varied population, either standing free as villages or grouped into towns and cities.”

But reading Rosalyn Baxandall and Elizabeth Ewen's new history, *Picture Windows: How the Suburbs Happened*, next to the architects' impassioned plea is instructive. In the hands of these historians, the suburb becomes not an anesthetized state of mind but a flawed and tragic chapter in the noble story of “America's attempts to provide housing to all of its citizens.” If the new urbanists find suburbs wanting for “a physical framework conducive to public discourse,” Baxandall and Ewen counter with the suggestion that postwar suburbs never truly provided an easy escape from the cacophony of civic life. Using Long Island as an historical laboratory, they trace its development from farmland to leisure-class retreat to mass-marketed worker's paradise, stressing throughout the struggles over race and class that transformed the landscape of Walt Whitman's Paumanok into Levittown.

Baxandall and Ewen illuminate the conflicts at the heart of postwar suburban growth. They show how the private housing industry, led by William Levitt with help from Sen. Joseph McCarthy, red-baited public housing and kept it in central cities. They document the fundamental role that federal mortgage and highway subsidies played in underwriting the private housing industry's suburban projects. Most importantly, though, they present a series of oral histories of various communities on Long Island that demonstrates how the civil rights movement and feminism have shaped suburban lives and communities. They discover multi-racial working-class coalitions that preserved harmony in integrated schools and feminist consciousness-raising groups that became the launching pad for suburban-based businesses headed by women breaking out of the “feminine mystique.”

They reject the idea that suburbia is a “cultural wasteland of conformity.” They take the “neotraditionalists” of the new urbanist movement to task, singling out Duany and Plater-Zyberk as purveyors of “theme park communities” whose view of the suburbs as wholly privatized

enclaves bereft of civic life is out of whack with the histories of those diverse peoples “who have selected to live in suburbia and have inscribed their signatures on its landscape.”

The social complexity of the suburbs, they argue, belies any simple denigration of its failures to provide the framework for public life; people themselves make a civic order when one is not provided for them. The problems of the suburbs today are those of the culture at large; suburbs threaten to become a “marker of social disintegration” or a “vast sprawl of exclusion” because the very same struggles over race and class that made cities have made suburbs. Postwar suburbs, they find, opened “home ownership to a new class of people” and raised the possibility of “a world in which workers would work less, would be better educated, and [would] live in standardized but well-built homes.”

If this sounds curiously like the very slogans and pitches used to sell the subdivisions in the first place, one gets an inkling of the difficulties inherent in Baxandall and Ewen's critical populism. As much as one might agree that

The new urbanist architects understand that planning around the needs of drivers rather than walkers or bikers is a bankrupt practice.

suburbs now have the problems of cities, suburbs and cities remain very different forms of social organization. Suburbs may not be a “haven from social issues,” but they are easier to live in than cities. They insure privacy and a plot of land, while also reassuring one that those are the correct and inevitable things to want—because, look, all around people are wanting the same things and living the same way. They create not only a new relation between city and countryside, but between individual and community.

In this sense suburbs are the ur-form of American ideology. They have their roots in the romantic, rustic retreats that the

gentry built to draw the veil over their entanglements in the dirt, grime and raw power of industrial might—while simultaneously celebrating the wealth that might provided. The private, domestic economy of the household further eclipses the more public world of the workshop, factory or square as the imaginative engine of the nation's values. While public life can be cobbled together on the metropolitan fringe, Baxandall and Ewen offer no account of the particular stumbling blocks that the very built environment of the suburbs puts up in the path of public deliberation and debate.

Of course, there is also a certain anxiety built in to this refuge. And it's this tension—Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck notice it in the “not in my backyard” phenomenon—that actually drives sprawl further outward. The more people that want a piece of the wilderness, the more it is ruined, and the further out one must go to revive the dying embers of the pioneer tradition. The American Dream—in all its hopes for security, purity and safety—has been both fulfilled and betrayed in the suburbs. Like many other utopian ideals, the suburban dream carries within itself the seeds of its own undoing; the impulse to escape social problems only ensures that they will be perpetuated and disseminated in an even wider sweep than before.

Yet the history of suburbs reveals another, less obvious betrayal that Baxandall and Ewen reveal but do not make explicit. A progressive tradition of modern town planning and housing activism—the secret history of the post-war suburban boom—was shelved for more market-friendly schemes of development. Baxandall and Ewen maintain that “the idea of suburbia was central to visionaries, planners, and socially conscious architects” who sought to help the “one third of a nation” that Franklin Delano Roosevelt found “ill-housed.”

This is not quite right. The planners and architects who responded to the needs of the poor in cities were most often either tenement reformers—who agitated for better housing in cities—or new town planners, like Clarence Stein, Catherine Bauer and Lewis Mumford of the Regional Planning Association of America. Baxandall and Ewen fail to understand that the latter were both anti-

urban and anti-suburban; they envisioned new kinds of communities built with modernist housing and ideals in garden settings. They wanted to build outside cities, but did not approve of the suburbs

design in architecture that spoon-feeds the masses their dose of gingerbread detail, dormer windows, front porches and picket fences to wean them off sprawl. Nor are they the so-called “new



of their day, where, as Mumford once put it, “people play at living in the country.” They wanted cities dispersed into smaller units, but, as Baxandall and Ewen note in another part of their book, found suburbs to be just as conformist as other “urban tastemakers” did. The suburb of the '50s was one legacy of New Deal reform, but it came at the expense of a more radical version of the American Dream of housing for everyone in a garden city.

The new urbanist architects are the closest thing we've got to the “new towns” vision of Mumford and his colleagues. In fact, Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck are more than architects. They work as city planners, developers and, most importantly, urbanists—a category of thinking and practice in short supply these days. Contrary to much of the common critical wisdom, DPZ—as their firm is known in the business—is not merely a purveyor of neotraditional

suburbanists” whose design for the isolated resort community of Seaside, Florida—derided by Baxandall and Ewen as “a packaged collection of nostalgia from a past that never was”—made such an apt setting for *The Truman Show*'s high-handed morality play. Their true accomplishment outweighs these usual retorts. DPZ realizes that the problem with sprawl is not “one of architecture but of community planning.” Sprawl is not made merely by unfettered growth or ugly buildings, but by a lack of thoughtful planning of the relationships between streets, buildings, commercial and industrial spaces, regional infrastructure and the natural environment. We could do a lot worse than to have an entire generation or two of new communities and urban infill areas modeled around DPZ's principles rather than those of the cul-de-sac developers.

Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck understand that planning around the needs of

drivers rather than walkers or bikers is a bankrupt practice, and that density and complexity are more engaging spatial principles than simplicity, segregation and dispersion. Recognizing that urban and suburban infill projects are of vital importance, they at least raise the idea of a "moratorium on greenfield development," while also admitting that exterior forces will ensure that most of their work gets done on the fringes of the metropolis. They have a knack for making the wonkish details of zoning, taxation and building codes legible and remarkably palpable. After reading *Suburban Nation* it becomes abundantly clear just how sprawl has been supported at all levels of government; traditional neighborhoods, they point out, are now illegal in most suburban and, increasingly, urban municipalities.

However, the new urbanists have a little too much faith in "the power of good design" to right the wrongs of sprawl and return us to the days of town-meeting democracy. While their nostalgia may be most visible in their traditional architectural styles, this penchant signals a deeper belief that life in America was "once spent enjoying the richness of community." One can agree that the conditions of sprawl do not provide the physical infrastructure for community to take root, but it is another thing altogether to assume that "community" flourished before the subdivision, or that it can be conjured up again by dispelling sprawl.

Consider their advocacy of places like Georgetown in Washington, D.C. or downtown Charleston, South Carolina. These bastions of leisure-class opulence, while attractive and pleasingly arranged, are hardly models of community. Despite their dense, narrow streets and mixed housing types, they offer little significant diversity of population. Indeed, DPZ's idea of diversity is a few schoolteachers, clerks, students, "artists, architects and other members of the intentionally poor" scattered among the CEOs and lawyers. While they applaud the soaring property values of these boutique neighborhoods, nowhere do the new urbanists make provisions for factories or small industries; the working class that has been gentrified out of Georgetown has no place in the new urbanist "traditional neighborhood" either.

Duany, Plater-Zyberk and Speck claim the "sparkling downtowns of the City

Beautiful movement and the elegant suburbs of the teens and twenties" as their spiritual ancestors. These physical legacies of the Progressive Era, while often wonderful spaces, were, just like the new urbanist developments, intended to be "role models for the poor" rather than concrete attempts to provide decent housing or communities for

working people. The new urbanists do not entirely ignore the housing needs of those unfortunates priced out of the Georgetowns of our country, but their solutions to suburban sprawl remain, like the entire history of the suburbs they deplore, merely what Baxandall and Ewen call a "commercial response to a long-standing social need." ■

Harrington's Way

By Kim Phillips-Fein

When Michael Harrington worked in the Catholic Worker movement as a 23-year-old in the early '50s, young staffers used to joke that they were in pursuit of sainthood. Harrington came

The Other American: The Untold Life of Michael Harrington

By Maurice Isserman
Public Affairs
449 pages, \$28.50

close; near the end of his life, he became "a kind of secular Saint Francis of Assisi," in the words of his biographer, Maurice Isserman. But Harrington never grew accustomed to sainthood, even the secular variety.

His position as a lone voice of conscience speaking out against Reaganism reminded him of how irritated his mentor, Norman Thomas, had been in the position of "a socialist who threatened no one and nothing ... who could be revered on ceremonial occasions and cited to prove the country was genuinely tolerant and democratic." Assessing his own life, Harrington worried that he would be remembered only as "a lesser Norman Thomas." It was a prescient, if damning, bit of self-analysis. At the end of his new biography of Harrington, *The Other American*, Isserman concludes that this characterization was, unfortunately, just about right.

Michael Harrington—author of *The Other America* and founder of Democratic Socialists of America—makes a perplexing biographical subject. He may have been "the heir to Eugene Debs and Norman Thomas as America's foremost socialist," but only long after the

Socialist Party had ceased to have any influence on national affairs. He opposed Communism in the '50s, and in the '60s he did not support the anti-war movement. He never held a position of influence in any large institution. *The Other America* is a moving book, but Harrington's reputation as "the man who discovered poverty" is wildly overrated, and his actual influence on the War on Poverty legislation was negligible. Even Isserman's opening quote—from the E.M. Forster novel *Howard's End*—suggests the difficulty of writing about someone like Harrington: "With infinite effort we nerve ourselves for a crisis that never comes."

Yet *The Other American* is more than a well-written biography or an elegant, balanced study of the hidden recesses of the postwar American left, though it is both these things. It is, in fact, as much a plea for a certain kind of left politics

**He represented the
"other" American left:
anti-Communist,
friendly to liberals,
sympathetic to
religion, willing to
work in the system.**

as it is a history book. What Harrington represents to Isserman is the "other" American left: anti-Communist, friendly to liberals, sympathetic to religion, willing to work within the system, nose turned up at the extremism of SDS.

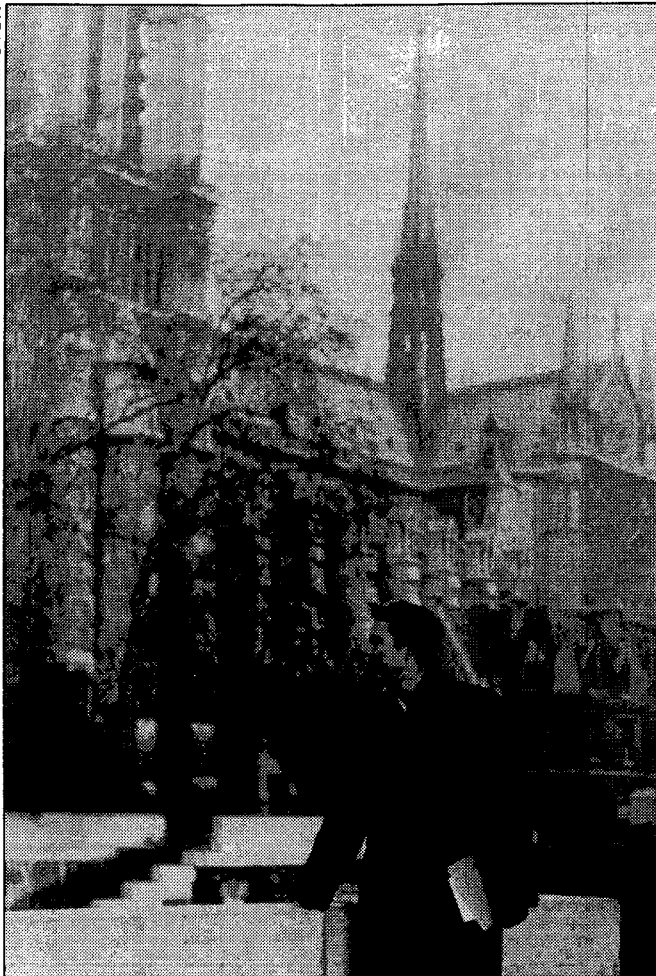
Isserman is not romantic about Harrington. The biography is remarkably even-handed, and offers a good account of Harrington's failures as well as his successes. But Harrington's life is of interest to Isserman primarily because it seems to represent a (mostly) usable past for what remains of the left today.

COURTESY STEPHANIE HARRINGTON

Michael Harrington was born in St. Louis in 1928, the only child of an Irish Catholic lawyer. An academic golden boy, Harrington was nonetheless restless and uncertain about what to do with his life. He entered law school at Yale but dropped out after one year. He flirted with a doctorate in English at the University of Chicago, but quit to move to Greenwich Village and drink at the White Horse Tavern. His career only began to take shape when he joined the *Catholic Worker*, where he produced book reviews and editorials at a rate that astounded even Dorothy Day.

Even before he joined the *Catholic Worker*, the Church had instilled in Harrington a passionately moral approach to the world. "From the time I was a little kid the Church said your life is not something you are supposed to fritter away; your life is in trust to something more important than yourself," he would say in later life. His writing for the *Catholic Worker* reflected this moral, not Marxist, approach to social problems: "To view ... poverty as a force in a historic [dialectic], is not only the dehumanization of the poor, it is the dehumanization of him who thinks it. The reaction to this poverty should be partly one of calculation, of how can it be eradicated, but it must also be of the Beatitudes, of hunger and thirst for Justice, of love and grief for what goes on before our eyes."

Despite its influence on his world view, Harrington's spiritual faith wav-



Michael Harrington in Paris, 1963.

ered throughout his time at the *Catholic Worker*. When he left, Day asked him, anxiously, "Is it a woman?" (She had good reason to be concerned—Harrington's youthful womanizing is a dark thread running through the first half of the book.) No, Harrington responded, "it's theology." But after leaving the *Catholic Worker*, he joined an organization more doctrinaire than the Church: the Young People's Socialist League. Originally part of the Socialist Party, Trotskyists took YPSL over in the late '30s. After several more internal splits, its last fragments went under the control of sectarian raconteur Max Shachtman, who would be one of Harrington's mentors for the rest of his life.

In many respects, Isserman writes, the Shachtmanites were identical to "the myriad of tiny radical sects that preceded or followed them into oblivion." But unlike the Trotskyists, they did not see

the Soviet Union as a "degenerate workers' state," but as a society run by a new "bureaucratic collectivist" ruling class—in other words, not really socialist at all. The sect's rhetoric was one of "stern confidence: 'history,' 'the masses,' 'the tasks of the moment' and so forth." But "this was a party founded on doubt, rather than on certainty." Though this meant constant infighting, it also made for a combative intellectual environment, a kind of think tank boot camp. It's no wonder that so many labor politicians and academics—Deborah Meier, Peter Novick, Sandra Feldman—cut their teeth in groups orbiting the Floral Park, Long Island hi-fi dealer.

Obsessive anti-Stalinism held the Shachtmanites together. A reader of *Labor Action* (the Shachtmanite paper) once observed that "the word Stalin and its derivatives" appeared 114 times in a single issue. Isserman tries hard to show that Harrington was not a stooge for Joe McCarthy. He criticized Sidney Hook and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, calling it "less

an organization devoted to the defense of cultural freedom than an agency propagandizing the American party line." He never took money from the CIA. But there's no doubt that for all their sectarian insanity, on some level the Shachtmanites were actually within the liberal consensus of the '50s: They agreed that the Communist Party and the Soviet Union were the commanding threats to human freedom.

The anti-Stalinist left sought allies among liberals and advocated downright reformist policies—not that anyone noticed. Much of *The Other American* is absorbed in detailing the political zig-zags of an organization with a couple of hundred members nationwide, which held symposia on topics the proper forum for which is a late-night bull session. (For example, if a "genuinely" socialist country had nuclear bombs, should it ever use them?) At first glance, the pragmatism of the Shachtmanites

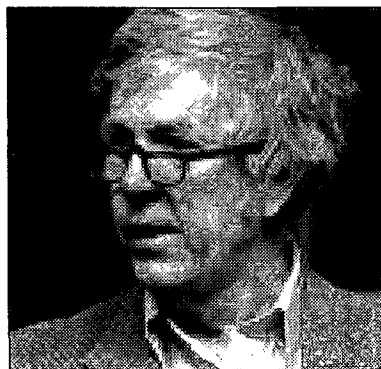
seems more ludicrous than any revolutionary rhetoric. But Isserman suggests that because the Shachtmanites were willing to work with liberal politicians, in a very odd way they were oriented toward real political change in a manner that the New Left was not.

By the late '50s, Shachtman came out in favor of "realigning" progressive forces behind the Democratic Party. Harrington initially ignored his teacher, and wrote in Norman Thomas for president in the 1960 election—something he later regretted as "one of the remarkably stupid actions of my political life." For the rest of his days, his main political project would be the struggle to reshape the Democratic Party into a coalition of labor, civil rights organizations and liberal groups.

Harrington's pragmatism led him to write *The Other America* without mentioning the word "socialist" once. (He agonized about leaving it out.) It's an overstatement to say *The Other America* "started" the War on Poverty; the expansion of the American welfare state in the '60s was just one aspect of a postwar economic policy that generally protected unions, increased wages and maintained full employment. While Harrington was a member of the president's task force in the War Against Poverty, by most accounts he played a minimal role in crafting the anti-poverty programs. (Dubbed "the only responsible radical in America" by Arthur Schlesinger Jr., he lived up to the description by signing his memos, "Of course, there is no real solution to the problem of poverty until we abolish the capitalist system.") *The Other America*, however, with its vivid descriptions of Harlem and Appalachia, of "urban hillbillies" and the terrible plight of the aging poor, unwittingly became the best piece of public relations for the War on Poverty the Johnson administration could have asked for.

Harrington's roots in the anti-Stalinist left encouraged him to

make alliances with liberals, but they put him at loggerheads with the New Left. Throughout the '60s, Harrington was



"The only responsible radical in America."

best known in certain circles for locking out the fledgling SDS (descended from the League for Industrial Democracy, a Socialist Party offshoot) from its offices because the Port Huron statement was insufficiently anti-Communist. Though Harrington apologized for the incident for the rest of his life, it's not really surprising that it happened. Unafraid of Communist domination, the New Left saw little reason to work with mainstream politicians. SDS president Paul Potters' 1965 description of Tom Hayden was apropos for the whole movement: "Tom seems to be moving closer and closer to a position that the liberal establishment (if not all liberals) constitutes the most dangerous enemy we confront."

The split deepened during the Vietnam War, when Harrington failed to support the anti-war movement, thinking it too sympathetic to the Viet Cong. Isserman is careful to note that

Harrington was always a pacifist and never supported the war. When Shachtman explicitly came out in favor of the war in the early '70s, Harrington finally broke with him. But if he wasn't in favor of the war, he was certainly opposed to the anti-war movement. Harrington's anti-Stalinist socialism—like Cold War liberalism itself—was consumed by its own contradictions in the Vietnam War.

To Isserman, Harrington's failure to work with the New Left approaches tragedy. "Michael let pass the chance of a lifetime to make a democratic socialist perspective relevant to the hundreds of thousands of Americans who supported the anti-war movement," he writes. "The Vietnam War destroyed the Socialist Party, and with it Michael's chance to reshape and reinvigorate the entire democratic left in America."

Harrington's relentless focus on economic issues, his moral seriousness, his "visionary gradualism," his "pragmatic radicalism," represent, to Isserman, the road not taken for the American left. If only the old Socialists had been able to take charge of the anti-war movement, convincing the kids to trade their Molotov cocktails for delegates' passes, perhaps the left would not be as marginalized as it is today. If only the New Left had followed Harrington into the



Littleton, New Hampshire, 1996, by Joeff Davis, from the photography exhibition *On the Prowl* at The Butcher Shop in Chicago, on display through June 30.

Democratic Party, maybe Reagan would not have won in 1980 and history would not yet be at an end.

It's hard to know what to make of a biography of someone whose primary interest is that he represents what did not happen. Undeniably, there's something appealing about Harrington's politics, especially compared to the craziness of the New Left in the late '60s. Although the Socialist Party was a mere shell of its former self throughout his lifetime, in a sense Harrington really did embody the Socialist tradition in American politics. He rejected a transcendent, utopian leftism, believing that modern radicals had to "walk a perilous tightrope," on the one hand to "be true to the Socialist vision of a new society," and on the other "bring that vision into contact with the actual movements fighting not to transform the system, but to gain some little increment of dignity or even just a piece of bread."

Like Debs, he eschewed direct action, believing that to "change the consciousness of a nation, one had to be

prepared to build an organization, start a publication, speak in a thousand halls to crowds of hundreds, or scores, or tens, if necessary, recruiting one's followers from those converted by the sound of one's voice and the strength of one's arguments." This kind of slow, patient mass organizing and institution-building is precisely what the New Left failed to accomplish, and it's not hard to understand why Isserman admires Harrington for at least recognizing its importance.

But does it make sense to ask whether Harrington's efforts to "realign" the Democratic Party could have succeeded if the New Left had fallen into line? It's hard to say. There were, after all, real obstacles to reforming the Democratic Party in the '60s and '70s. The moral absolutism of the New Left was partly youthful naïveté and "revolutionary posturing." But it also reflected a genuine sense of how compromised the liberal consensus was, and how important the segregated South was to the Democratic Party. The New Left's alienation from the Democratic Party

reflected the ambiguous nature of the institution itself: the party of labor and of the Solid South, of the War on Poverty and the Bay of Pigs.

There's something oddly rigid—if one wanted to rib him, one might almost say sectarian—about Isserman's implicit criticism of the radical style of the New Left. A truly "realistic" approach to politics would recognize that there are times when it's appropriate for the left to work with the Democrats or other liberals, and there are other times, as at the height of the Vietnam War, when that's a terrible mistake. "Militant moderation" always seems more reasonable, but there are times when it's completely off the wall. Pragmatism makes sense when you have a fighting chance of exercising political power; otherwise, it's as self-deluded as dreams of world revolution. As Michael Harrington knew too well, in politics, as in history, there is no room for saints. ■

Kim Phillips-Fein, a contributing editor of *The Baffler*, frequently writes for *In These Times*.



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The Deadly Impact of
Sanctions and War

Edited by Anthony Arnove

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Slaughterhouse Live

By Jeff Sharlet

I've never cut the balls off a bull, but living in a nation that's still a cowboy in its dreams, if not in fact, has given me a fair sense of how it's done. I've even stared down a plateful of bull balls, otherwise known as Rocky Mountain oysters, and I can tell you the experience is not a pleasant one. I'm a city boy. Give me a nice piece of roast chicken any day.

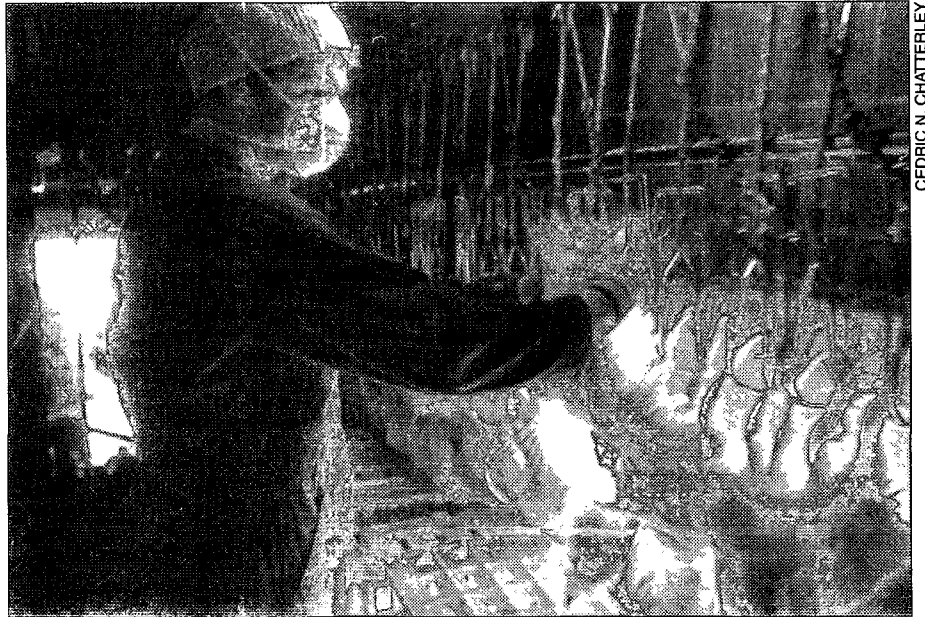
Of course, half the fowl of this world have balls too. And before those birds get to your plate belly-up and golden-brown, something has to be done with the family jewels. Apparently, what's done is known as "caponizing"—a fact I learned from a remarkable yet frustrating book called *"I Was Content and Not Content": The Story of Linda Lord and the Closing of Penobscot Poultry*. Here's Lord on the subject: "Caponizing. That's a male bird, you take the—what I would call the balls—out of a male bird and make them bigger, okay, get a fatter bird."

Got that? I didn't. But the interviewer, an oral historian named Stephen A. Cole, must have, because he didn't ask Lord to explain any further. I know this, because Cole, and his collaborators on the book, Cedric N. Chatterley and Alicia Rouverol, opted to include a full transcript of their conversations with

"I Was Content and Not Content" isn't, to say the least, compulsively readable. As the story of a rural community nearly wiped out by the shutdown of a poultry-processing plant that never provided

Frisch and novelist Carolyn Chute, who contribute a foreword and an essay respectively, have made their book a rough model of what that could be.

The interviewers repeatedly ask Lord for details that would make her life fit into the framework of a feature film, about a spunky working-class heroine, an Erin Brockovich of the factory floor. But Lord resists. Does she still stay in



CEDRIC N. CHATTERLEY

Linda Lord cared nothing for her work, but no work she found could compare.

**"I Was Content and Not Content":
The Story of Linda Lord and the
Closing of Penobscot Poultry**
By Cedric N. Chatterley and Alicia
Rouverol with Stephen A. Cole
Southern Illinois University Press
134 pages, \$34.95

Lord: the "ums," the "ahs," and their own stupidest questions. Theirs is an absolutist approach to oral history.

Oral history, the notion that historical subjects can and should tell their own stories, has been a beloved genre of the left ever since former slaves and white abolitionists crafted true tales of redemption for the moral edification of Northern white audiences. In recent decades, it has become bestseller material in the hands of Studs Terkel, who has crafted compulsively readable narratives out of the lives of ordinary folks.

more than miserable jobs, it's hardly news. Nor is Linda Lord a hero of the resistance; she's a dour, unimaginative conservative who blames her troubles on unions and OSHA regulations. And the book's historical essays are great if the state of our poultry concerns you, but otherwise they're dry meat.

So, having gutted a book I hope will find a wide readership, let me turn to its strongest point: *"I Was Content and Not Content"* may well point the way toward an approach to making books that isn't just radical, but actually revolutionary. All oral history is already radical by definition, concerned with going to the roots, the raw words of which more polished stories are made. But given that oral history takes as its mission a challenge to book-making authority, presenting its subjects as interpreters of their own past, it ought to be much more. The multiple collaborators on *"I Was Content and Not Content,"* as well as historian Michael

touch with her factory friends (i.e., was there a community that couldn't be broken)? Nope. Does she develop righteous rage toward her former employers? Not really. Did she take pride in the inherent dignity of her labor? Well, the pay was O.K.

Yet these ambivalent answers aren't disappointing. When they're contrasted with Rouverol's essay about the industry, Chute's diatribe against middle-class minds that assume aspiration is as natural and necessary as respiration, and Chatterley's photographs of Lord slaughtering chickens, covered in gore, alone in the "blood tunnel" where birds the machines have missed go to die, it becomes clear that she cared nothing for her work, but no work she finds can compare. Her bosses were good men, but they couldn't do the right thing. She doesn't miss her friends, because they're not really her friends anymore. In fact, the community to which she belongs within the pages of *"I Was Content and*

Not Content" isn't one of chicken workers, but of the multiple authors of the book itself.

One image shows Lord as a blur in a cowboy hat, pounding drums for her country band, The Golden Nuggets. Her face is hard to make out through the motion and high-speed film grain, but she does indeed look content, and more to the point, aware of but uninterested in Chatterley's lens. Indeed there are times in this book when Lord seems to be directing the action, when the show on display is the curiosity of her

interrogators—the process by which she is perceived, the way the book is made, the means of production.

All fascinating stuff, but full of sound, fury and chicken feathers without a storyteller. Even as "*I Was Content and Not Content*" points the way toward books that transcend the traditional relationship of storyteller and listener, it requires the contradiction of having one anyway. ■

Jeff Sharlet is a feature writer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Hamlet showed a laudable dedication to the text, Mel Gibson's an unsurprising fondness for its star. Almereyda shows fealty to an idea, that if this story still deserves to be told in the first year of the 21st century, then a castle is no longer the appropriate setting, nor a state building of any type. For all the flaws, all the moments when we hear the creaking of Almereyda bending over backward to fit Shakespeare's words to his premise, his film may be just the *Hamlet* we deserve. More accurately, it is the *Hamlet* we need, the one that recognizes how we've left the castle door open, and let power shift from government to the businessmen.

Shakespeare Inc.

By Ben Winters

Something is definitely rotten in Denmark—for one thing, it has moved to Midtown Manhattan.

This is the doing of director Michael Almereyda and his flashy *Hamlet*, which transports the tortured tale from gloomy medieval Scandinavia to brooding contemporary New York. Over the 400 years

Hamlet

Directed by Michael Almereyda

that Shakespeare's existential revenge play has tantalized directors, each has refashioned the piece, grafting on new concerns and bending the story to fit new contexts. Most often, however, they've been content to retain the basic notion that the Prince of Denmark is both a prince and a Dane.

But in Almereyda's take, Castle Elsinore has found new life as a sleek, glass-walled hotel somewhere off Times Square, in the heart of the new New York, glimmering and crimeless even at midnight—except for the occasional regicide. As Baz Luhrmann did in 1996 with his street-level fantasia *Romeo + Juliet*, Almereyda has seized the Bard by the forelocks and dragged him boldly through space and time, arriving in the irony-soaked, fast-edit world of 2000, where only goateed slacker hero Ethan Hawke makes sense in the lead.

Here's Claudius and Gertrude at a press conference announcing their betrothal, smiling flawlessly under the

glare of klieg lights; here's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern downing longnecks, hollering their betrayals over blaring electronica; here's hip-hop Ophelia in baggy jeans, brows furrowed in adolescent petulance, the very model of a modern rootless club kid. Much has been deleted from Shakespeare's script, in the name of logic as much as brevity; Hamlet cannot give his famous instructions to the players ("do not saw the air too much with your hand"), since the "play" that is to "catch the conscience of the king" is now a film and video installation.

For the record, this is not a great *Hamlet*, but neither is it a terrible one; though Hawke is little more than adequate, many of the supporting performances—notably the still surprising Bill Murray as Polonius and young Julia Stiles as a surprisingly affecting Ophelia—are quite marvelous. And for all the criticism that Almereyda is sure to endure at the hands of sniping film critics and fussy Shakespeare acolytes, all of his transformations and deletions are not capricious, flowing as they do from a single grand conceit: Denmark the country has been updated into the Denmark Corporation, a multinational concern helmed until his untimely death by "King" Hamlet, chairman and CEO.

All the taxi cabs and business suits and laptops are but sound and fury: This single stroke is what Almereyda has brought to the table. Kenneth Branagh's

In December of 1600, roughly the time Shakespeare was wrapping up *Twelfth Night* and getting started on *Hamlet*, Queen Elizabeth bestowed a charter upon the English East India Company, awarding a group of London businessmen a monopoly on trade with the distant East. There is no reason to suspect that the playwright would have been terribly excited about this development. For one thing, he had his own business concerns; the Globe Theater was built in the same year—with Shakespeare as a principle investor—and he was the most popular playwright in London. But more importantly, this is a man whose business was

A new irony-soaked, fast-edit *Hamlet* that we deserve, where Denmark the country is now the Denmark Corporation.

drama, and the drama of the day (the power struggles, the excitement, the betrayals and romance) was not in mercantile transactions—it was at court.

While all manner of scheming merchants and moneylenders populate Shakespeare's canon (Shylock being the most infamous), there are no major moguls or captains of industry, because such creatures did not yet roam the earth. And for all his imagination, the Bard was no fabulist—his works, even outside the history plays, were inspired

with few exceptions by real figures or existing stories. *Hamlet* was a radical update of an extant history play, itself likely modeled upon the account of one "Amlethus" in a 12th-century volume called the *Historia Danica*.

When he wanted to spice up his tales with fiendish political intrigues, Shakespeare had plenty of exemplars available. The Somerville Plot, the Babington Plot, the Essex Plot—in the late 1500s, hardly a year went by without some group of noblemen or other conspiring to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, only to be discovered, publicly denounced and brutally executed. Nor did the trend end with her death (of natural causes, miraculously) in 1603; the succession of James I brought first the Main Plot, for which former court darling Walter Raleigh was carted away, and then Guy Fawkes' Gunpowder Plot, the foiling of which is still celebrated in England.

Plots were in ample supply, and even as Shakespeare cribbed his own from history books or existing plays (no one would be so foolish as to dramatize the actual events of the day), the playwright crammed his work with exactly these sorts of political schemers and social climbers: Lear's daughters, Caesar's betrayers, Macbeth and his devious wife—and of course Claudius, arguably the ultimate Shakespearean villain, who pours a dram of poison in his sleeping brother's ear, seizes his kingdom and marries his wife.

As played by Kyle MacLachlan, Almereyda's modern Claudius is sleek and poised, conducting his business from the back of limousines or while toveling off after a dip in the executive pool. He may be a thug, but he's a thug in *The Sopranos* mode, expansive and charming with a heart full of brutality. This kind of surface charm, this thin skin of warmth and outreach covering audacious evil, is analogous to what we've accepted as a prime feature of the titans of latter-day capitalism, that gossamer layer of press releases and public gestures covering sweatshop laborers and environmental outrages.

Almereyda's reshaped *Hamlet* should strike a chord with those coming to the theater after a year of watching the nascent anti-globalization movement bubble over into an international call

to action. The events of the past year in Seattle and Washington have been largely organized by intelligent young people dissatisfied with the power structures erected by their elders, and the various ways the spread of global business has worked against global democracy. These protesters look and dress and act much as Hawke's Hamlet and Stiles' Ophelia; even in the very halls of corporate excess, Almereyda suggests, the new blood doesn't like what it sees.

Hamlet in anyone's version is a play thick with ideas, among them the plain truth that a wrong cries out to be righted, no matter the personal or political cost. Almereyda's evolution of *Hamlet*, for all its sleek surface, brings this notion to bear on a new world, a world where the beast born with the East India Company has also evolved, where the intrigues of governments are necessarily of less public concern than those of the Fortune 500. ■

Ben Winters is a writer in Chicago.

Letters

(Continued from inside front cover)

Bull also makes a series of factual errors: Her comment about "glib journalists who covered this protest from their desks" is ignorant. I witnessed the entire demonstration and was close enough to hear and tape all the negotiations between Bull and Gainer. And I saw Gainer holding the flowers throughout. That Bull is so adamant, so indignant and so wrong about this trivial point illustrates her disconnect from reality.

I don't know why Bull spoke to Paul Marini rather than directly to Katya Komisaruk, but Komisaruk, and my notes, confirmed the accuracy of the quote.

As for the police "concession" to don badges, Bull still doesn't get the point. It is the law in D.C. that police must wear their badges—not subject to negotiation and certainly not something to trade, as she did, for concessions by the demonstrators. She got snookered.

Finally, in nature, to molt is "to cast or shed feathers, skin or the like, in the process of growth or renewal." In democracy, that same, sometimes unpretty process comes from the acknowledgment and discussion of divergent opinions. ■



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PUT ON HOLD, A WOMAN WITH SUPERNATURAL POWERS TAKES REVENGE



Continued from page 30

the U.S. Olympic Committee is providing training stipends to the top three women wrestlers in each of six weight classes. Two states, Texas and Hawaii, have sanctioned girls' wrestling as a high school sport, and Florida is moving in that direction. Three small colleges, including Cumberland, now give women's wrestling scholarships.

Van Skaik started wrestling in seventh grade in Ohio and was captain of what she calls "the guys' team" her senior year. She's typical of girl wrestlers thus far: most are the only girl on their high school teams, wrestling solely against boys unless they come to a state or national USGWA meet.

Girl wrestlers have a mixture of feminist and post-feminist consciousness that's quite appealing. Says Katie Downing of the University of Minnesota-Morris team, who took a silver medal in the world championships last year: "A lot of people think that if a girl's out to wrestle, she's on a mission for all womanhood or whatever. I don't think I've ever met a girl who's out to prove a point. It's not about that. All the girls I know that wrestle are there because they love to wrestle." But doesn't she have a sense that it's great to be a pioneer? "That's a definite bonus—to even the playing field as far as women's sports in general," Downing admits. "It opens people's minds a little bit too, the whole idea that men aren't just dominating sports in every field. That's nice too."

Doug Reese, who coaches women at Minnesota-Morris, convinced the administration to support a women's team as a cheaper way of complying with

champions in their weight classes) say they do encounter bad attitudes—but from other coaches, or other parents, or refs, not from their peers. "They used to," Lynde says, "but now that they know I'm good, they don't want to hassle me, otherwise I'd beat the crap out of them. They respect that a girl is going out there and giving it her best shot in a guy-dominant sport."

I ask coach Johnna Walker of the East Detroit Wrestling Club about the benefits of wrestling for girls. I expect her to talk about confidence and self-esteem, but the first thing Walker mentions is stamina and endurance. Clearly, these girls are athletes first, young people in need of assertiveness-training second. Or not at all.

What about the "inappropriate touching" question, when girls wrestle boys? Odd how, in a homophobic society, this doesn't come up for boy-on-boy. Monica LaBelle, mother of national champion Keristen LaBelle, who has a 50-10 record against boys, says she never thinks about this question unless Keristen's grandfather brings it up. Bailo explains patiently: "In wrestling, any touching has one of four purposes: to secure a take-down, to secure a reversal, to get an escape, or to pin your opponent. You don't go on the wrestling mat to cop a feel or to get a date for the prom."

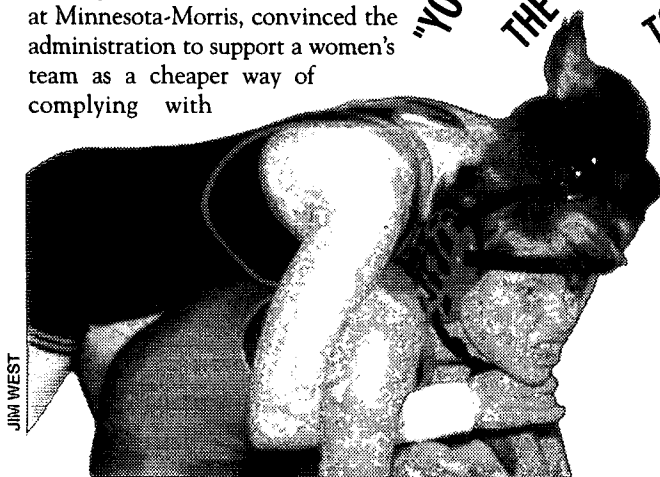
Differences do exist. Everyone admits that the boys are stronger. But girls are more flexible: "Girls are Gumby," in Bailo's words. "Girls can twist out of anything," says Melissa Fogarty, who coaches a high school club. "Boys get so frustrated trying to pin me. With boys if you hit a good fast move, you can pin 'em. The only way you can pin a girl is if she gives up."

Since a big part of wrestling is leverage, the wrestler's goal has always been to be the heaviest person in his or her weight class. That has meant "cutting weight" to get to the next lowest class. Male wrestlers are known for sweating the pounds off—as much as 15 pounds in two days—taking laxatives at weigh-in time, anything to "make weight." In 1997 three college wrestlers died within six weeks, prompting some rule changes.

For girls, this obsession with shedding pounds would seem to interact dangerously with the already existing pressure to look like a supermodel. But girl wrestlers say no. Melissa Fogarty says: "Anorexia and bulimia are mental diseases that have to do with the way she looks at her body. Wrestling won't make you anorexic or bulimic." Saunders adds that wrestling and anorexia don't mix, because "you don't just stand there and look pretty and squeeze into jeans and smoke cigarettes and drink Diet Coke. As an athlete, you can't skip on your health or you won't win. The ideal is to be as strong and as lean as you can, to maintain low body fat with a strength-to-mass ratio as perfect as possible."

In June, tryouts for the U.S. women's world team, and a younger cadet team, are taking place in Battle Creek, Michigan. Lynde will be there, as will Keristen and Brandi. These girls have their eyes on college scholarships and, most of all, the Olympics. "The cadet team travels around the world to Peru and Poland and stuff," Lynde says.

And all she has to do to make the team is to keep on being someone who can beat the crap out of you. ■



Title IX, which mandates gender equity in school sports. But USGWA founder Kent Bailo believes the rise of women's wrestling is not entirely related to Title IX, because Title IX is so universally unenforced; schools generally have just presumed that girls aren't interested in wrestling or other contact sports. But Bailo insists that interest follows opportunity, not the other way around. He cites Texas, where girls' high school teams jumped from 35 to 85 in one year after the sport was officially sanctioned.

A GM worker and 32-year wrestling official, Bailo is a man on a mission, devoting all his free time to promoting girl-on-girl wrestling. The USGWA ran seven state tournaments this year and hopes to add 11 more in 2001.

Surprisingly, the girls who wrestle on high school teams say that their classmates don't tease them or shun them. Girls like 99-pounder Lynde Baltrusaitis of Caledonia, Michigan, or 131-pound Brandi Rosenbrock of East Detroit High School (both national

By Jane Slaughter

Ashley Perez is still winded from her victory on the mat. She has come all the way from Amarillo, Texas to a high school gym in Lake Orion, Michigan, to compete in the U.S. Girls Wrestling Association's third national championships. Perez tries gamely to explain her match strategy: "I try to wear the girl out, by whatever it takes. The girls out there, they try to beat me, they'll just get beat. ... Eventually they'll get tired, and then I'll get 'em."

On the mats, the action is intense, sweaty, fast. The girls are pushing, grunting, curling, wrenching, contorting. Wrestling takes every ounce of concentration and effort for three two-minute periods. You can't relax for a moment because your opponent is always attacking. You can't even stall, because the ref will give your opponent points for that.

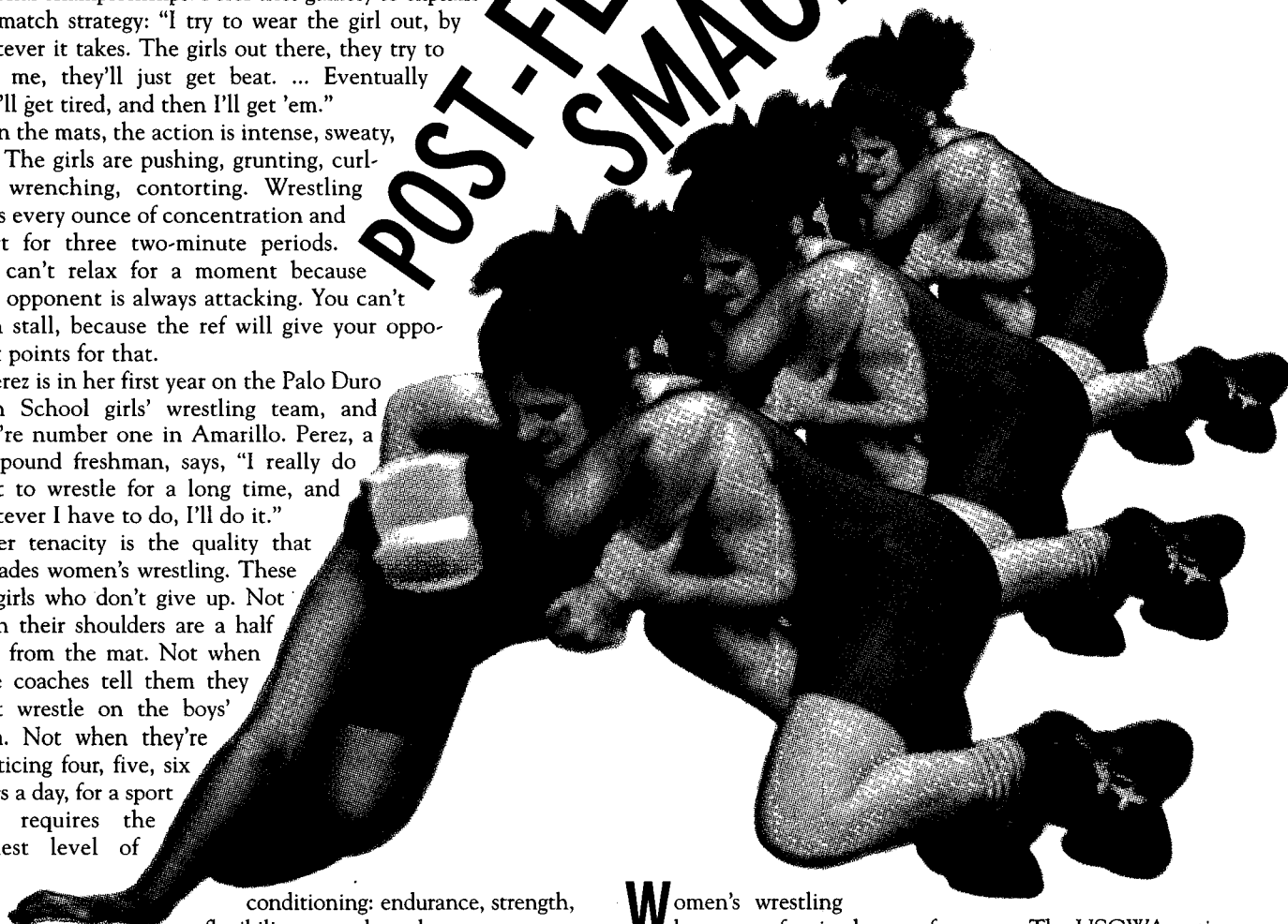
Perez is in her first year on the Palo Duro High School girls' wrestling team, and they're number one in Amarillo. Perez, a 127-pound freshman, says, "I really do want to wrestle for a long time, and whatever I have to do, I'll do it."

Her tenacity is the quality that pervades women's wrestling. These are girls who don't give up. Not when their shoulders are a half inch from the mat. Not when male coaches tell them they can't wrestle on the boys' team. Not when they're practicing four, five, six hours a day, for a sport that requires the highest level of

conditioning: endurance, strength, flexibility, mental toughness.

So the girls run—many of them do cross-country for their schools—and lift weights and do push-ups and sit-ups. "We like to wrestle," says Trish Saunders, world champion in the 101-pound weight class, who has come to Lake Orion to offer an inspirational pitch. "It's too tough an activity to do for any other reason besides liking it."

POST-FEMINIST
SMACKDOWN!



Women's wrestling has grown fast in the past few years. The USGWA national tournament drew 272 girls in 1998, and 432 from 44 states last March. "The caliber's just gone way, way up," says Sarah Van Skaik, a freshman at Cumberland College in Kentucky. "The first year was like nothing. Last year it was about five times better—and this year it's just a whole lot better."

The sport is almost certainly slated for the 2004 Olympics, and

Continued on page 29